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Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

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SA on track to eliminate malaria disease by 2028

Pretoria: South Africa is on track in its commitment to achieve malaria elimination status by the year 2028, as outlined in the National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan, despite facing challenges such as heightened heatwaves exacerbated by climate change with potential to directly impact transmission and the burden disease.

Malaria elimination promises both health and economic benefits in line with the goals of the 2030 National Development Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This has potential to also benefit the Southern African countries collectively on issues of trade, tourism, health, and economic growth.

While progress has been made in reducing the burden of malaria, particularly in endemic provinces like Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and KwaZulu-Natal, further efforts are needed to curb local transmission.

As the country joins the global community to observe World Malaria Day on April 25 to recognize global efforts to control malaria to reduce the burden of the disease and avoid preventable deaths, the Department of Health urges all stakeholders, including communities, healthcare professionals, civil society organizations, and international partners, to collaborate in intensifying the fight against malaria, aiming to foster a healthier and more equitable world for current and future generations.

Malaria is a preventable and curable life-threatening disease transmitted by a type of female mosquito called Anopheles, which remains a significant global health concern.

In 2022, an estimated 249 million new cases and approximately 608 000 deaths were reported, with Sub-Saharan Africa bearing the brunt of the burden.

In South Africa, 9,795 cases and 106 deaths were reported in 2023, demonstrating notable progress, including the subnational elimination of malaria in the King Cetshwayo District of KwaZulu-Natal.

The government is committed to integrating the ethos of ensuring equal access to malaria prevention and treatment services for all with the principles of the National Health Insurance, which essentially has the objective of attaining Universal Health Coverage.

Eliminating malaria is an ambitious task that requires sustainable resources, collaboration with neighbouring countries (including Botswana, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe), evidence-based policies, strong partnerships and a dedicated workforce.

South Africa is working towards strengthening and harnessing its domestic expertise, while collaborating with global partners.

Last year South Africa was amongst the countries which received global prestigious awards from the World Health Organization for their efforts to achieve important milestone towards malaria elimination.

The 2024 World Malaria Day will be commemorated under the theme: "Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world," which focuses on acknowledging the varying effects of malaria on men and women, emphasizing the need to address these discrepancies in prevention and healthcare access.

Malaria symptoms include headache, fever, chills, fatigue, muscle and joint pain that occur up to three weeks after first potential exposure.

However, early diagnosis and treatment are strongly recommended as the disease rapidly progresses to severe illness, often with severe consequences.

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