

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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SA Health sector holds TB Conference in Durban

Durban: South Africa will this week (04-07 June) convene the 8th SA TB Conference at International Convention Centre, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal as part of ongoing efforts to reduce new TB infections and deaths, while tracking progress made towards achieving the 2025 targets set by the United Nations at the UN High Level Meeting and the 2030 targets to END TB epidemic in line with the pragmatic END TB Strategy by the World Health Organization.

Globally, TB is still a leading cause of death from a single infectious agent and one of the greatest public health threats in our country today. South Africa is one of the 30 high burden tuberculosis (TB) countries that collectively contribute to 87% of the estimated incident cases worldwide. It is claiming approximately 54,000 lives annually or around 148 lives daily in South Africa.

The country has made strides to ensure that all people with TB have equitable access to high-quality diagnosis, treatment, care, and preventive therapy. 56 % of TB patients experience catastrophic cost as per recent WHO survey. These include a roll-out of shorter regimens with better drugs for the treatment of drug-resistant tuberculosis, and the notable launch of the bedaquiline-pretomanid-linezolid-levofloxacin (BPAL-L) programme. Other innovative interventions include the introduction of targeted universal TB testing with TB testing regardless of symptoms among high-risk groups, the introduction of SMS notifications for reporting TB tests results, the use of artificial intelligence such as digital chest X-Ray in TB screening and diagnosis.

This four-day biannual conference will re-energise the TB community through in-person interaction between local and international stakeholders consisting of policy makers, academics, researchers, government officials, and members of civil society organisations.

The conference will be held under the theme: “**Accelerating progress to end TB**”, which serves as a clarion call for all sectors of society to join hands to prevent avoidable deaths from a preventable and curable disease.

The conference will consist of not-to-miss parallel insightful sessions designed purposefully to cover diverse aspects of TB and TB control discussions which include an update on TB vaccine, TB in the mines, Insights and innovations towards ending TB, Stigma measurement among people with TB accessing, TB care services,

Treatment response in children with presumptive pulmonary Tuberculosis over six months, the results of community-based TB services targeting migrant workers in the South of Mozambique, etc.

The National Department of Health in collaboration with stakeholders in the sector including South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) is currently implementing the national TB Recovery Plan which aims to reverse the losses incurred during the Covid-19 pandemic and to accelerate efforts towards attaining the National Strategic Plan, United Nations High Level Meeting, Sustainable Development Goals and End TB targets will be strengthened.

The Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo will deliver a keynote address to officially open the conference on Tuesday, 04 June 2024 at 15h00. The opening ceremony will be attended by several dignitaries including KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health Nomagugu Simelane, eThekweni Municipality Mayor Mxolisi Kaunda, and Deputy Chairperson of SANAC Steve Letsike.

Details of the conference are as follows:

Dates: Tuesday, 4 – Friday, 7 June 2024

Time: 8h00 – 17h00

Venue: Durban International Convention Centre, KwaZulu-Natal

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