



For Immediate Release

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NEW DATE SET FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL HIV COUNSELLING & TESTING CAMPAIGN

Press Statement from the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC)

SANAC and the Department of Health have announced that the national launch for the HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) Campaign will take place on Sunday 25th April at Natalspruit Hospital in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng.

The national launch, initially scheduled for the 15th of April, was postponed while President Jacob Zuma and Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe were away on official business. Both will be present and participating in the launch proceedings this Sunday. They will be joined by senior leaders from all sectors of our society. Provincial launches of the HCT campaign will take place on Friday 30 April.

Co-hosted by Gauteng province and Ekurhuleni Municipality, the national launch takes the form of a health fair where HIV counselling and testing will be on offer, together with pap smears and TB, anaemia, blood pressure and blood sugar screening.

The event marks the roll-out of the largest HIV counselling and testing campaign the world has seen, aiming to encourage 15 million South Africans to voluntarily test for HIV and learn their HIV status in the coming 14 months. It will run until June 2011, the end of the current National Strategic Plan on HIV, AIDS and STIs (2007-2011).

The long-term campaign objectives are four-fold:

- To mobilise people to know their HIV status;
- To support people with key prevention interventions in order to take proactive steps to a healthy lifestyle - irrespective of HIV status;
- To increase the incidence of health-seeking behaviour; and
- To increase access to treatment, care and support services.

To ensure the success of such an ambitious initiative, the campaign has been designed to roll out progressively, starting in nine focus districts - one per province - and moving in succession to nine new districts every two months. This will continue until all of South Africa's 52 health districts have been covered. Over this two-month focus period, targeted social mobilisation through community-based activities will continue in the focus district.

All South Africans are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of their leadership, to go for their own HIV tests and so know their status. Furthermore, the participation of all sectors of South African

society – public, private and civil – is invited and encouraged. Those looking for ways to be involved should contact the SANAC Nerve Centre at 012 312 6184 or sanacnervecentre@gmail.com

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