

HIGH HIV/AIDS AND TB A RISK IN THE JTG DISTRICT

The prevalence and severity of HIV/AIDS and TB in the district is a call for concern hence the intervention by the district municipality in a form a dialogue that was held in Olifantshoek on the 19th April 2018. The dialogue was conducted in partnership with the Department of Health and civil society organizations from all the local municipalities. Olifantshoek was chosen as a host because it was identified as a hot spot during consultation on the Provincial implementation plan of 2017-2022. It was also found out that defaulters' rate on treatment was one of the causes for such high rate of HIV/AIDS, TB and STI related illnesses.

Olifantshoek is one of the many affected areas in the district and other hotspots identified were Batlharos, Bankhara and Wrenhcville. The proceedings of the day were opened by the Executive Mayor accompanied by Ms. Keolebogile Ohimile from Department of Health and the Chairperson of the Community Development services committee, Councillor Kegomoditswe Masilabele. The Executive Mayor spoke very strong about patients who continuously default on their treatment; she further encouraged those who are negative to remain on a clean path because the treatment is taxing on government and its resources. The Mayor also told the community to support those on treatment and to ensure that they take their medication on time every day. A candle light memorial was observed in memory of those affected and those who passed away to HIV/AIDS and TB related illnesses.

When presenting, Ms. Ohimile gave a brief background on Olifantshoek, which is a relatively small town with a population of about 10 035. She indicated that the current prevention strategy is focused on messages, medical male circumcision and condom distribution which is targeted at sexually active people and are on continuous care management & treatment. The current percentage of HIV positive people stands at 6% and 78% of the population do not know their status. The community do undergo HIV/AIDS testing and those who are positive adhere to treatment.

Ms. Ohimile also encouraged community members to take treatment daily and at the same time to prevent drug resistance. She also cautioned them not to share medication because tablets are counted for specific months; community members were also taught the importance of honouring appointments.

The prevention messages were shared which include amongst others to cover one's cough to prevent spreading the disease to other people, regular TB screening at every visit and tracing TB contacts of index cases.

The dialogue continued with four commissions tackling prevention strategies, prevention, treatment and support, reaching vulnerable groups, and the last commission tackled addressing social drivers of HIV/AIDS and STIs. Resolutions taken at the dialogue will form part of the report that will be sent to province and also set the agenda for the other affected areas. The impact of these illnesses on community will continue to pose even greater threat to the population of this district and this dialogue is one the engagements and intervention that government and the stakeholders continue to bring to our communities.



LR Ms. Keolebogile Ohimile from Department of Health, Councillor Kegomoditswe Masilabele, Chairperson Of Community Development Services Portfolio Committee and Executive Mayor Sofia Mosikatsi



Executive Mayor, Sofia Mosikatsi addressing community members

