

gangsterism



Buhle Bema Chrestu Interdenominational Churches in Zion Founder and Secretary Zodwa Vilakati, says the church has a responsibility to protect children against anything that causes social problems in society.

were mentioned by the DPM, Mdluli mentioned another social ill that the nation needed to address as soon as possible to save the future of the country.

Violence

"Gangsterism is another social ill that the nation needs to address in the twinkling of an eye. It is even worse because it comes with violent acts. If you ask teachers both in primary and high schools, they say they are struggling to work where there are children who are gang members," he said.

The senator said he was approached by a head teacher in one of the schools, who told him that he had resorted to searching pupils' bags before being allowed entry into the school.

The search is to ensure that the pupils do not bring weapons, such as knives to school, since most of them are violent. "These children draw scary signs in their books. They have tattooed their bodies with gangster signs. I am pretty sure that the signs they tattoo on their bodies need the body to be numb.

"The truth is they do not have numbing medication, therefore, it is highly possible that they use drugs to numb their bodies," he said.

Scammers

He said there were a lot of gangs which include the 26, 27 and 28 gangs. The senator revealed that some children include scammers known as *hoshaya*, who scam people through MTN Mobile Money, claiming to be government grant officers.

The senator stressed that the county needed to urgently form an aggressive national programme against gangsterism, to save the future of children and the nation at large.

"We need a national plan and strong laws that will stop this social ill," he said. He mentioned that this also affects those who are not part of the gangs, as they come to the other innocent children and demand a protection fee from them. The DPM and other senators echoed Mdluli's plea and agreed that the nation needs to spring into action before the issue gets out of hand.

During the quarterly performance report debate of the Prime Minister's Office, Mbabane East MP Welcome Dlamini asked what the PM's Office was doing, which is a form of a national exercise to counteract gangsterism.

The MP stated that the children who were recruited into gangs were also used in exercises such as civil unrest to fuel violence. He said if the gangs were left to do as they pleased, the nation would be in big trouble.

Farewell for GSCH chief matron who served for 28 years

BY THOKOZANI MAMBA

MAKHEWU – After serving the Good Shepherd Catholic Hospital (GSCH) for 28 years, Chief Matron Mandisa Ndlovukazi is leaving the health institution.

GSCH Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Muzi Dlamini also announced that Dr Michael is leaving the hospital during the farewell function held on Friday. The event was attended by Lubombo Regional Education Officer (REO) Richard Dlamini, the institution's Board Chairperson Dr Khetsiwe Mthethwa, Senior Medical Officer (SMO) Kiron Koshy and senior management of the hospital.

Dlamini expressed his unhappiness for losing resourceful staff members of the health facility, who were part of the management. The CEO said Ndlovukazi's name will be embedded in the history books of the institution as she also was part of the team that formulated the institution's five-year strategic plan.

Experience

He mentioned that Ndlovukazi's departure will be detrimental on the basis that she was a valuable asset to the institution due to her vast knowledge and experience as a senior nurse. "I am short for words to express my feelings about the departure of the two senior members of the staff. Ndlovukazi has contributed a lot to the growth of this institution. We also received bad news that Dr Michael is also leaving the hospital and I was told that he was also out of the country to receive medical attention as he is not well," he said.

The CEO urged pastors to pray for the staff to remain resolute and focused in their tasks to serve the nation.

"The leaving senior team members will remain in our memories for the contribution they made to the growth of the hospital. We will miss your kindness and your openness to the members of the nursing staff," said the CEO.

In her remarks, Board Chairperson, Mthethwa, said she was still shocked about the prompt departure of the two



Good Shepherd Catholic Hospital Chief Matron Mandisa Ndlovukazi (C) receiving a certificate of appreciation from CEO Muzi Dlamini (R) and the hospital Board Chairperson Dr Khetsiwe Mthethwa on Friday during her farewell function. (Pics: Thokozani Mamba)



The Chief Matron with the senior nursing staff.

senior members of the management. The chairperson stated that she nurtured and mentored Ndlovukazi while she was still in tertiary.

Mthethwa mentioned that Ndlovukazi had a successful journey in the health institution, as she worked in various departments until she was promoted to be the chief matron. "We are so sad about the untimely departure of the two senior staff members as they contributed a lot to the growth of the institution. We pray that Dr Michael recuperates from his sickness and we

urge the remaining staff to maintain unity at all times," she said.

The outgoing chief matron thanked the health institution for the vast contribution to her growth as a medical officer. Ndlovukazi said it was not an easy decision to take, but reminded the remaining staff to remember that they were hired to take care of the health of patients. "There is a lot the hospital can achieve in the near future and I urge unity among members of the staff for the betterment and benefit of the patients," she said.

Surging cervical, breast cancer cases cause for concern

BY MLONDZI NKAMBULE

MBABANE – In a concerted effort to combat the rising incidence of cervical and breast cancer, a coalition of organisations embarked on a comprehensive screening drive at Msunduzi.

The organisations included Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation Eswatini, Eswatini Breast and Cervical Cancer Network (EBCCN) and Eswatini National Cancer Control Unit (NCCU), among others. The screening drive was staged outside Msunduzi Health Care. According to Dr Noma Dlamini, the resident doctor at the centre, there was no doctor at the facility initially and as they started attending to clients outside just pharmacy-related services, they saw the need to offer the services to women in the area.

Cases

"Apart from the national scourge of these cancer cases, we wanted to bring these partners, so that we honour women since it is women's month," she said.

According to Neliswa Dladla, the Health Promotion Officer at NCCU, this initiative marks a significant stride towards the broader mission of eradicating cervical cancer and improving overall health outcomes in Eswatini.

"The figures are scary as they keep rising now and again. We call on more women to utilise these free services," she said. The screening programme, according to Dladla, aims to address the high prevalence of cervical and breast cancer cases within Msunduzi and other areas in the country by offering several key advantages that are expected to have



A nurse, Bonisile Khumalo, attending to a patient who had come to access the screening services at the mobile clinic. (Pic: Mlondzi Nkambule)

a profound impact on community health.

Dladla went on to mention that one of the primary benefits of the screening programme was its potential for early detection. "Identifying cervical and breast cancer in its initial stages significantly enhances the likelihood of successful treatment, thereby improving survival rates. This early intervention is crucial for addressing cancers before they progress to more advanced, and often more difficult to treat, stages," she added.

Worth noting is that this is not an isolated situation, only affecting Eswatini. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in South Africa after breast cancer.

According to the Cancer Association of

South Africa (CANS), one in every 42 women has a lifetime risk of being diagnosed with cervical cancer, highlighting that cervical cancer can be successfully treated if detected in the early stages of the disease.

Opportunity

By detecting pre-cancerous changes and early-stage cancers, the programme provides individuals with the opportunity to receive timely and effective preventive care. This proactive approach is instrumental in halting the progression of the disease, ultimately leading to reduced mortality rates. Regular screenings have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness in lowering death rates through early diagnosis and prompt treatment.



Dr Noma Dlamini, the resident doctor at Msunduzi Health Centre. (R) Neliswa Dladla, the Health Promotion Officer at Eswatini National Cancer Control Unit (NCCU). She mentioned that one of the primary benefits of the screening programme is its potential for early detection.

Nqobile Dlamini, one of the Msunduzi residents, who benefitted from the drive, mentioned that she came to the mobile clinic as a follow-up from a test she did not so long ago. She mentioned that she was looking for a second opinion and heard about the drive. "One thing I loved was the fact that they take you through the whole process," she said. "Since this is just a screening exercise, they then refer you to the right institution for further treatment. It does not end here."

The initiative also aims to empower community members with valuable knowledge about their health.

By facilitating access to screening services, individuals are better equipped to make informed decisions regarding their well-being. Furthermore, the screening day serves as a platform to raise awareness about the importance of regular

health checks, fostering a culture of proactive healthcare within the community.

While the initial investment in screening programmes can be substantial, the long-term benefits are considerable.

Early detection reduces the need for more costly treatments associated with advanced-stage cancers, making the programme a cost-effective solution in the long run. In addition to its focus on early detection, the programme offers holistic support, including counselling, education, and referrals for further treatment, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive care.

This initiative not only highlights the importance of preventive healthcare, but also exemplifies the transformative impact such programmes can have on the lives of individuals and communities alike.