



health

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## Media Release

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### **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) - Test and Treat to be provided to Sex Workers starting 1 June 2016**

In his budget speech on 10 May 2016, the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi announced that commencing on 1 June 2016 selected sex worker programmes around the country will offer oral antiretrovirals as pre-exposure prophylaxis in addition to the other HIV prevention interventions and will offer treatment upon diagnosis for those that are HIV positive. Combination prevention has been demonstrated to prevent new HIV infections and given the very high level of HIV infections in sex workers as documented below, this community needs additional protection. In addition, early initiation on antiretrovirals contributes to both better health and decreases the possibility of HIV transmission to their clients and partners. The latest World Health Organisation HIV guidelines issued in December 2015 provides evidence for the use of PrEP in high risk populations as well as universal test and treat regardless of CD4 count.

An estimated 20% of the 350,000 people annually infected with HIV in South Africa are connected with sex work. HIV prevalence amongst female sex workers in South Africa is estimated to be 59.8%. The SA Health Monitoring Survey of Female Sex Workers (SAHMS-FSW) estimated that the prevalence of HIV among female sex workers was 71.8% in Johannesburg, 39.7% in Cape Town, and 53.5% in eThekweni. These significantly high rates of infection coupled with the possibility of onward transmission to their clients and partners, confirms the urgency of focused interventions for sex workers.

To ensure that PrEP is offered in programmes that already provide comprehensive services to sex workers (including general health screening, STI screening and treatment, provision of condoms, contraceptives, HIV counselling and testing, ART treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis and circumcision for male sex workers), the National Department of Health has assessed and approved of the following sites for the initial rollout of PrEP: Esselen Street Clinic in Hillbrow, City of Johannesburg, SSWP Wellness Centre in Soweto, Sediba Hope Medical Centre in Tshwane, TB/HIV Care Clinic in eThekweni, and the North Star Alliance Trucker Wellness Centres in Musina (Limpopo), Pomona (Gauteng), Ngodwana (Mpumalanga), Pongola (KZN), Upington (Northern Cape), and Hoedspruit (Limpopo). Additional sites will be prepared to provide these services in the coming months.

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