



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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City of Johannesburg Press Statement by
Cllr Herman Mashaba, Executive Mayor

City opens Substance Abuse Treatment Centre in Eldorado Park

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Today, MMC for Health and Social Development, Dr Mpho Phalatse and I, opened the Eldorado Park Community Based Substance Abuse Treatment Centre as part of the City's war on drugs.

In September 2017, we held an Anti-Drug Summit at which we launched the City's Integrated Substance Abuse Strategy and the Local Drug Action Committee. Through the Department of Health and Social Development, led by MMC Phalatse, we will see the long-term roll-out of 33 outpatient rehabilitation facilities.

The City has invested in five free Community Based Substance Abuse Treatment Centres, of which this centre is one. A further three free treatment centres will be rolled out in the Westbury, Riverpark and Joubert Park Clinics during this financial year.

There will be no charge for treatment at these clinics, because in the main, the places where drug addiction is worst, is in our poorest communities, such as Eldorado Park.

There is no place for drug peddlers in our City. Law enforcement authorities, service providers and substance abuse researchers agree that drug dependency, in all its forms, translates into extensive health, legal and economic problems for City and its residents.

MMC Phalatse says: *"There is a great need for the establishment of Community Based Rehabilitation Substance Abuse Treatment Centres to compliment services rendered by both the private and state-owned rehabilitation centres, due to exorbitant costs that render these facilities inaccessible to our indigent residents."*

"It is for this reason that the City adopted a multi-disciplinary intervention program seeking to reduce substance abuse in communities," says MMC Phalatse.

In recent years, *nyaope* (also called *whoonga*) has become dramatically popular in townships. According to the Community Agency for Social Enquiry's (CASE) study conducted in 2014, the abuse of dagga, nyaope and alcohol is rife in Eldorado Park, while awareness and services available to treat substance dependency and abuse is significantly low.

Taking into consideration the City's major political and social transformations over the years; and continental and global trading links having become the norm, an integrated approach is required based on uniform law as per the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, No 70 of 2008. This Act provides for mechanisms aimed at demand and harm reduction in relation to substance abuse through prevention, early intervention, treatment and re-integration programmes.

"The City's substance abuse treatment program was benchmarked against both local and international programs, including the city of Cape Town, as history has demonstrated that there is no single solution to this complicated and far reaching issue affecting every community within our City," says MMC Phalatse.

The approach taken will look into the entire chain of substance abuse to ensure addicts recover holistically and we will be working closely with the relevant Departments in the City to provide skills development and other interventions to limit chances of relapse.

Institutionalization should be viewed as a last resort. The City's Health and Social Development officials will work towards strengthening their working relationships with individuals, families and communities.

It is imperative for us to unite in ridding our communities of drugs. For that to happen, we must speak out and find new ways to achieve economic upliftment.

Drugs are killing our children. They are our future. Without a vibrant youth, this City and this country will be doomed.

We cannot let that happen.

Cllr Herman Mashaba
Executive Mayor
City of Joburg

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