

NCDOH TIMES

NEWSLETTER

Tuesday, 31 March 2026

Vol. 9

A MODERN HEALTH SYSTEM DELIVERING QUALITY CARE TO A GROWING PROVINCE

TOP NEWS

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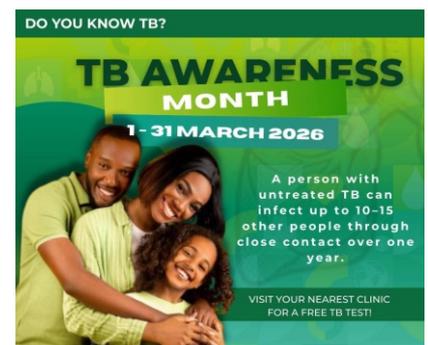
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YES! YOU AND I CAN END TB: NORTHERN CAPE RENEWS ITS COMMITMENT ON WORLD TB DAY

On 24 March 2026, the Northern Cape Department of Health joined communities across the world in marking World TB Day under the theme "Yes! You and I Can End TB" – with the provincial commemoration hosted at West End Specialised Hospital in Kimberley, led by MEC for Health, Ms. Nontobeko Vilakazi.

The occasion was both a moment of reflection and a rallying call. Tuberculosis remains one of the most persistent public health challenges in our province and the data demands honest conversation. In the 2024/25 financial year, 61,165 people were tested for TB in the Northern Cape a 4% increase from the previous year, reflecting growing momentum in screening efforts. Of these, 8,217 confirmed TB cases were recorded, representing a 4% decrease from the 8,568 cases reported in 2023/24 a trend that signals progress, but leaves no room for complacency.

The province recorded 301 drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) cases, a concerning 20% increase that demands urgent attention. The drug-susceptible TB treatment success rate currently stands at 76%, falling four percentage points short of the national 80% target, largely

driven by a high lost-to-follow-up (LTFU) rate of 13.5% across all districts, against a 9% target.

Frances Baard District continues to carry the heaviest burden, with over 2,000 confirmed cases. Municipalities including Phokwane, Hantam, Siyathemba, Kheis and Khai-ma record the highest TB incidence rates in the province. Yet within these challenges lie genuine reasons for hope. The province has maintained TB screening rates above 85% for several consecutive years. The introduction of the new BPaL-L treatment regimen for drug-resistant TB in 2024 has already shown remarkable results – pushing the Rifampicin-resistant TB treatment success rate from 60% to 78%, surpassing the national target of 75%.

The 2026 commemoration supports the implementation of the National TB Recovery Plan 4.0, with the Northern Cape committed to contributing 129,232 NAAT tests annually towards the national target of testing 5 million people each year until 2028.

Speaking at the event, MEC Vilakazi issued a clear and direct message: "TB is preventable. TB is curable. But ending this disease requires all of us individuals, families, communities and government to act together."

This World TB Day, the call is simple: know the symptoms, get tested, complete your treatment. Together, we can end TB.



A NEW CHAPTER FOR HEALTH CARE IN THE NORTHERN CAPE: MEC VILAKAZI AND HOD PHIRI TAKE THE HELM

The Northern Cape Department of Health entered 2026 with renewed energy and a clear sense of direction following the appointment of two key leaders who together represent both political will and administrative expertise at the highest level.

On 16 January 2026, Ms. Nontobeko Vilakazi was appointed as the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Health in the Northern Cape, while Mr. K.V. Phiri simultaneously took up his role as the Acting Head of Department (AHOD) – bringing focused leadership to a department that serves millions of people across one of South Africa’s most geographically vast provinces.

The appointments signal more than a change in personnel. They represent Premier Dr. Zamani Saul’s commitment to stabilising and strengthening the province’s healthcare system.



Central to their mandate is the Premier’s 10-Point Action Plan a focused and ambitious blueprint for transforming healthcare delivery across the Northern Cape. The plan targets the most pressing challenges facing the department head-on, with key areas of focus including:

1. Leadership stability; ensuring consistent, accountable management at all levels of the health system
2. Devolution of delegation to District Health Services; bringing decision-making closer to communities
3. Addressing inadequate human resources; filling critical gaps in healthcare staffing
4. Addressing ageing infrastructure; modernising facilities that can no longer meet growing patient demands
5. Addressing poor records management; improving the accuracy, accessibility and reliability of patient data
6. Improving ICT connectivity; ensuring that technology supports and enables better healthcare delivery
7. Ensuring availability of medical equipment and supplies; so that no patient is turned away due to resource shortages
8. Ensuring availability of pharmaceutical supplies; guaranteeing consistent access to essential medicines across all facilities
9. Ensuring safety and security ; protecting both patients and healthcare workers in all facilities
10. Drastic improvement of Emergency Medical Services; because in an emergency, every second counts



Together, these ten priorities form a comprehensive roadmap, one that acknowledges the real challenges communities face while committing the Department to measurable, people-centred action.

With MEC Vilakazi providing political leadership and HOD Phiri’s drive for operational excellence, the Northern Cape Department of Health is positioned to deliver on Premier Saul’s vision: a province where every resident, regardless of where they live, receives the quality healthcare they deserve.

ROBERT MANGALISO SOBUKWE HOSPITAL INSTALLS NEW 90CM BORE CT SCANNER

Kimberley, Northern Cape – Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital has taken another significant step forward in advancing patient care with the installation of an additional new 90cm bore CT scanner, expanding its diagnostic imaging capacity and strengthening its role as a leading referral tertiary hospital in the Northern Cape.

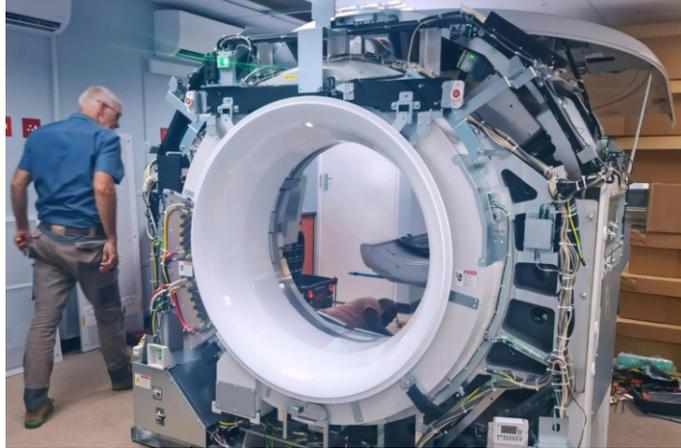


This investment reflects on Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital's commitment to dignity in healthcare. By expanding diagnostic capacity, the hospital is ensuring that every patient receives timely, precise, and compassionate care.

The new scanner, with its wider bore design, offers enhanced comfort for patients and improved imaging capabilities. This addition complements the hospital's existing equipment, ensuring faster turnaround times for critical scans and reducing waiting periods for patients across the province.

The scanner will be instrumental in diagnosing complex conditions, guiding surgical planning, and supporting emergency medicine. It also strengthens the hospital's ability to serve as a training and research hub for medical professionals in the Northern Cape. The installation marks part of a broader modernization drive at Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital. These developments highlight the hospital's dedication to combining cutting-edge technology with community-centered service.

Hospital leadership emphasized that the installation is not only a technological upgrade but also a community milestone. The 90cm bore allows for better accommodation of patients who may have previously faced challenges with standard CT scanners, including those requiring specialized positioning or those with mobility limitations.





THE FOUR-WEEK HPV VACCINATION PROGRAM IN THE FRANCES BAARD DISTRICT

The Northern Cape Department of Health – Frances Baard District has recently launched a significant public health initiative: a four-week HPV vaccination program aimed at protecting young girls from the human papillomavirus (HPV). This campaign is not just a routine vaccination effort; it represents a concerted effort to reduce the prevalence of HPV-related diseases, particularly cervical cancer, which is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among women worldwide. With the support of local health departments, community organizations, and schools, the program seeks to educate the public about HPV and promote vaccination among young girls, specifically targeting those in grade 5.



HPV is a common virus that can lead to serious health issues later in life, including cervical cancer. The World Health Organization emphasizes that vaccination against HPV is one of the most effective ways to prevent this disease. By targeting girls at a young age, the Frances Baard District program aims to create a generation that is largely protected from the virus, thereby reducing future cancer incidences and associated healthcare costs.

A key component of this initiative has been the extensive collaboration with schools across the Frances Baard District. The Northern Cape Department of Health has partnered with educational institutions to conduct vaccination drives directly at schools, making it easier and more accessible for students to receive their shots. These school-based efforts not only streamline the vaccination process but also ensure that young girls are protected in a familiar environment, reducing barriers to participation.

The importance of this campaign extends beyond immediate health benefits; it also serves as a critical educational opportunity. Public health officials have organized informational sessions in schools and community centers to discuss the significance of HPV vaccination, dispelling myths and addressing concerns. By empowering young girls and their families with knowledge, the program aims to create a culture of health awareness that encourages ongoing discussions about preventive care.



Community engagement has been a cornerstone of the program's success. Local leaders, healthcare providers, and parents have collaborated to promote the campaign through social media, flyers, and community events. This grassroots approach not only raises awareness but also cultivates trust within the community, ensuring that families feel informed and supported in their decision to vaccinate. The involvement of local figures helps to normalize the conversation around HPV and encourages more individuals to participate in the vaccination program.

As the four-week HPV vaccination program in the Frances Baard District comes to a close, its impact will likely be felt for years to come. This initiative, spearheaded by the Northern Cape Department of Health, not only aims to protect the health of today's young girls but also lays the groundwork for a healthier future generation. As the community reflects on the importance of this campaign, it serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to prioritize preventive healthcare measures and foster a culture of health that can combat diseases like HPV and cervical cancer effectively.



PAVING THE WAY FOR MODERN HEALTHCARE: SOD-TURNING CEREMONY FOR KURUMAN DISTRICT HOSPITAL'S NEW R68 MILLION ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY UNIT

Kuruman Accident and Emergency (A&E) infrastructure development project stands as one of the Northern Cape Department of Health's boldest commitments to transforming healthcare delivery in the Province. On March 11th, 2026, this vision took a tangible step forward as Premier Dr. Zamani Saul and MEC for Health, Ms. Nontobeko Vilakazi, turned the first sod at Kuruman District Hospital, marking the official commencement of construction for a state-of-the-art Accident and Emergency (A&E) Unit.

The ceremony was attended by a high-level delegation, including the Head of Department (HOD) Mr. Oupa Phiri and the Executive Mayor for the John Taolo Gaetsewe (JTG) District Municipality, Cllr. Queen Mogatle-Thoane. This R68 million project is designed to serve as a critical lifeline for over 2.5 million people living in the growing district in the province, with a population size of approximately 293,432 people across.



Kuruman District Hospital, established in 1983 with only 63 beds, was originally built to serve only a small portion of the local population. Today, it serves approximately 53% of the JTG District's total catchment population of 293,432.

The pressure on the facility is most evident in its emergency services. The hospital's original A&E unit consisted of just a single room with two beds. Despite these limitations, the unit handled 60% of all casualty cases in the district. Most notably, the hospital manages approximately 539 motor vehicle accident (MVA) cases per financial year, accounting for 66.1% of all MVA's seen across the entire JTG District.

Premier Dr. Zamani Saul in his keynote address drove home a clear message, modernising the Province means ensuring that healthcare infrastructure keeps pace with the growing needs of every district.

To provide immediate relief while the permanent structure is under construction, a temporary 8-bed modular structure was opened on the 8th of January 2026. This intervention successfully increased total A&E capacity to ten beds, leading to improved waiting times, enhanced patient privacy, and better clinical outcomes.

The new A&E Unit represents a permanent solution built for current and future generations. This development is also strategically aligned with the long-term plan to establish a Regional Hospital in the JTG District. As the first sod was turned yesterday, the message from the provincial leadership was clear: the people of John Taolo Gaetsewe deserve a facility that matches the economic and social vitality of their region.



NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (NHI) PROVINCIAL WORKSHOP FOCUSING ON CONTRACTING UNITS FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WORKSHOP IN KIMBERLEY.

The National Department of Health continued with its provincial engagements, this time around focusing on Northern Cape, towards the establishment and implementation of Contracting Units for Primary Health Care (CUPs) in Phokwane local Municipality, as part of the National Health Insurance (NHI) reforms.

The one-day session took place at Protea Hotel in Kimberley, facilitated by Dr. Harsha Somaroo from the National Department of Health and attended by District Health Management Teams and Hospital CEOs.

These engagements form part of the CUPs Proof-of-Concept (PoC) initiative, which aims to test and refine the operational systems, governance, provider payment, and health system building blocks required to enable population-based strategic purchasing and capitation payments at the primary health care level.



The Chief Director responsible for the Provincial Health Department, Ms. Zama Kiti expressed gratitude to a continued support from national to ensure that the provinces works towards realising this goal. Furthermore, She highlighted that attainment of this goal is a moral imperative that the department must work towards, in light of the worsening inequities in the current healthcare service delivery model.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN PIXLEY KA SEME'S HEALTH BYTES ON COMMUNITY HEALTH AND ADVOCACY: TB AWARENESS, MENTAL HEALTH, STI, HIV AND PREGNANCY.

From the 2nd – 6th of March 2026, the Pixley Ka Seme District coordinators team visited Douglas to strengthen healthcare and show a unified commitment to service delivery and excellence.

The visit aimed to support the local facilities, fortify services while addressing service delivery challenges in the healthcare facilities namely – Braaipal and Lehlohonolo Adams clinics. The visit continued with a constructive health dialogue at Wesslan high school, which marked a significant step towards a free and healthy generation.

The youth awareness dialogue focused on TB awareness, mental health, STI, HIV and pregnancy prevention including condom education. Sessions like these act as a critical intervention for improving the well-being of young girls and boys by educating, fostering safer behaviours and empowering them.

Key outcomes from the youth health dialogue include: Promoting testing Increasing condom self-efficacy, Mitigating the mental health stigma, Reduce teenage pregnancy and increase pregnancy uptake, Increased support systems. The session concluded with the distribution of dignity packs to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. This initiative plays a significant role in supporting, ensuring that they have access to essential self-care items and are able to attend school regularly.

The principal of the school expressed gratitude towards the Department of Health in Pixley Ka Seme, "this meeting has brought a renewed sense of unity, determination towards delivering quality service delivery and setting a clear path towards a people centred health system for the Northern Cape province.

Attendees from the Pixley Ka Seme District included Mr. P. Jack, Prevention coordinator, Mr T. Godas, HIV coordinator, Mr. S.G. Mlahlwa, Condom coordinator, Sr. D. Maramba, Maternal Child and Women Health, Sr. P. Hila, Mental illness, N. Sijadu, Environmental Health, N. Parkies, Care and Support and Amanda Thobothobo, Communications Officer.



A LEGACY CARVED IN CARE: THE OPENING OF THE BOEBOE VAN WYK ONCOLOGY CLINIC

The Namakwa District reached a defining milestone as the Northern Cape Department of Health and Vedanta Zinc International officially opened the doors of the BoeBoe Van Wyk Oncology Clinic at Dr. Izak van Niekerk Hospital in Springbok, a facility that is already rewriting the future of cancer care for thousands of patients across the region.

Named in honour of the late Cde. Jacobus Frederick "BoeBoe" Van Wyk from the Namakwa region, a proud ANC stalwart who served as Member of Parliament, MEC for Health, Speaker of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, and Mayor of Nama Khoi Local Municipality, the clinic stands as a deeply personal and enduring tribute to a man who devoted his life to the people of this province.



For too long, cancer patients in the Namakwa District were forced to travel hundreds of kilometres to Kimberley or Cape Town simply to access chemotherapy treatment, a journey that placed enormous emotional, physical, and financial strain on patients and their families. That era is now over.

The clinic's 10-bed Chemotherapy Unit has the capacity to treat up to 250 patients per month, bringing life-saving treatment closer to home, in a dignified and caring environment. The 366m² facility, fully constructed by Vedanta Zinc International at a value of approximately R22 million, was delivered in just 10 months. On time, on budget, and to the highest quality standards, with 45,000 construction manhours logged and not a single worker injured.



This achievement did not emerge overnight. It is rooted in a decade-long partnership between Vedanta and the Pink Drive Mobile Cancer Outreach Unit, through which more than 8,500 people were screened for early cancer detection since 2015, a R8.5 million investment that laid the foundation for this permanent facility.

Speaking at the opening, MEC for Health Ms. Nontobeko Vilakazi expressed heartfelt gratitude to Premier Dr. Zamani Saul for his continued leadership and vision for the province. The ceremony was also attended by Mayor of Nama Khoi Municipality Cllr. Mervin Cloete and Ms. Caroline Mongale from the National Department of Health.

The BoeBoe Van Wyk Oncology Clinic is more than a building — it is proof of what becomes possible when government and the private sector unite with shared purpose. Every bed in this facility represents a fighting chance. Every treatment, a renewed sense of hope.



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE: THE "PILLARS OF HEALTH" GALA AWARDS CEREMONY

The red carpet was rolled out for a night of prestige and gratitude as the "Pillars of Health" Excellence Awards Gala took centre stage. This inaugural event brought together distinguished guests to recognize the extraordinary contributions of healthcare workers within the John Taolo Gaetsewe District.

The gala served as a formal platform to honour the "unsung heroes" who maintain the backbone of our public health system. By focusing on professional employee recognition, the event highlighted the district's commitment to morale and service excellence.



The evening featured a comprehensive recognition program designed to ensure that excellence was celebrated across the entire spectrum of healthcare delivery:

- **Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) Recognition:** In a major milestone for the district, specific honours were presented to facilities that successfully reached OHS compliance, marking their dedication to meeting rigorous national safety and quality benchmarks.
- **Legacy of Public Service:** A significant portion of the evening was dedicated to Long Service Awards, honouring individuals who have committed between 10 to 40 years to the public service.

- **22 award categories:** Awards designed to ensure that excellence was recognized across the entire spectrum, both clinical and administrative, of healthcare delivery. Highlights of the recognition categories included:

- **Clinical Excellence:** Awards for nursing and medical staff who have demonstrated exceptional patient care and clinical leadership.
- **The Backbone of Facilities:** Significant emphasis was placed on maintenance and support staff, acknowledging that a clean, safe, and functional environment is vital for healing.
- **Programmatic Innovation:** Recognition for those driving long-term sustainability and resource stewardship in public health initiatives.



Beyond the trophies and applause, the gala underscored a deeper departmental vision. That every role, both clinical and administrative, are the pillars that ensure that the people of JTG receive services.

As the JTG District continues to grow—driven by intense economic and mining activity—the "Pillars of Health" Gala stands as a reminder that while buildings and equipment are essential, the true strength of the health department lies in the dedication of its people.



NORTHERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ACCOUNTS FOR QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

The Northern Cape Department of Health recently appeared before the Portfolio Committee on Health in the Provincial Legislature, where MEC Vilakazi, accompanied by Head of Department Mr. Phiri and Members of the Executive Committee, tabled the Quarter 3 Performance Report for the 2025/2026 financial year. The delegation took Members of Parliament into confidence on both the challenges experienced and the successes achieved in meeting the Department's targets.

Following the Legislature appearance, the Department convened its two-day Quarter 3 Performance Review Session, bringing together departmental leadership across all districts to further assess progress and chart the way forward into the final stretch of the financial year.

The Department will next convene for its Annual Performance Review, where the full picture of the 2025/2026 financial year will be assessed.

LETS TALK PREGNANCY!!

1. Why is Mental Health important during pregnancy?

Mental Health is as important as physical health in pregnant mothers, most pregnant women experience depression, anxiety and stress which can lead to the general deterioration of their health and can affect the bonding between the Mother and the unborn child and that is why this year the main focus is on the Mental Health of pregnant mothers so we can have healthy mothers and healthy babies.

2. How common is Mental Health or rather emotional difficulties in pregnant women?

It is quite common in South Africa as you can get one out of five women that might experience depression or anxiety during pregnancy and even after birth but the women do not talk about it or do they seek help, that is why we are educating the staff and public on routine

screening for Mental Health during pregnancy and after pregnancy and this will happen at all the Primary Healthcare Clinics (PHC) in the province.

3. What are the symptoms and signs of Mental Health difficulties in pregnant mothers?

If you are feeling sad and worried most of the time, if you struggle to sleep and you are struggling to take care of yourself, if these symptoms last longer than two weeks, please do seek medical attention and Mental healthcare as soon as possible.

4. What is the importance of food and nutrition in pregnant women?

A balanced diet everyday can keep one's energy levels and mood stable, for instance if a pregnant mother is low on certain nutrients such as your folic acid, iron, vitamin B12 and your Omega3s which might cause the pregnant mother to feel tired and struggle to concentrate. We encourage healthy eating because it is very important for the unborn child's overall development. What we mean when we say healthy eating or a balanced diet we talking about a basic meal that consists of 1 or 2 different vegetables, in one serving, wholegrains and protein are also very important in a one serving meal.

5. Can breastfeeding affect a mother's Mental Health?

Yes! The good thing about breast milk is that it releases a number of hormones such as oxytocin often called the "love hormone" or "cuddle chemical," it is released when the baby touches, smells or nurses, reducing stress, lowering blood pressure and promoting a deep sense of bonding and relaxation in the mother.

6. Does poor Mental Health affect breastfeeding?

Yes, unfortunately poor Mental Health can delay the milk supply and sometimes the mother will not feel confident to breastfeed and that too can lead to Mental Health difficulties, that is why we advise emotional support from family and loved ones at home as well as at the hospital, helping the mother with other household chores can also relieve a great deal of stress from a breastfeeding mother.

7. What other extra support does the NCDOH offer to pregnant women?

There are currently 10 dieticians at the RMSH and 2 are dedicated to the maternity wards and a certified lactation consultant that assist with more challenging cases. NCDOH would also like to encourage women to visit their nearest PHC's (clinics) as soon as they know that they are pregnant for medical checkups and a smooth pregnancy experience.



World Hearing Day 3 March

From Communities to Classrooms: Hearing Care for All Children

Why It Matters

- 60% of childhood hearing loss is preventable.
- Early detection = better learning, communication, and future opportunities.
- Hearing care is a right, not a privilege.

Key Messages

- Protect young ears, protect futures.

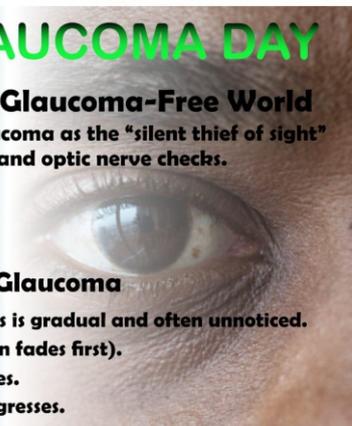


WORLD BIRTH DEFECTS DAY

Awareness, Prevention, Support

Why It Matters

- Birth defects affect millions of children worldwide.
- Early care and awareness can save lives.
- Families need support, not stigma.



WORLD GLAUCOMA DAY

Theme: Uniting for a Glaucoma-Free World
Raising awareness about glaucoma as the “silent thief of sight” and encouraging regular eye and optic nerve checks.

12 MARCH 2026

Common Symptoms of Glaucoma

- No early symptoms — vision loss is gradual and often unnoticed.
- Peripheral vision loss (side vision fades first).
- Tunnel vision in advanced stages.
- Blurry vision as the disease progresses.

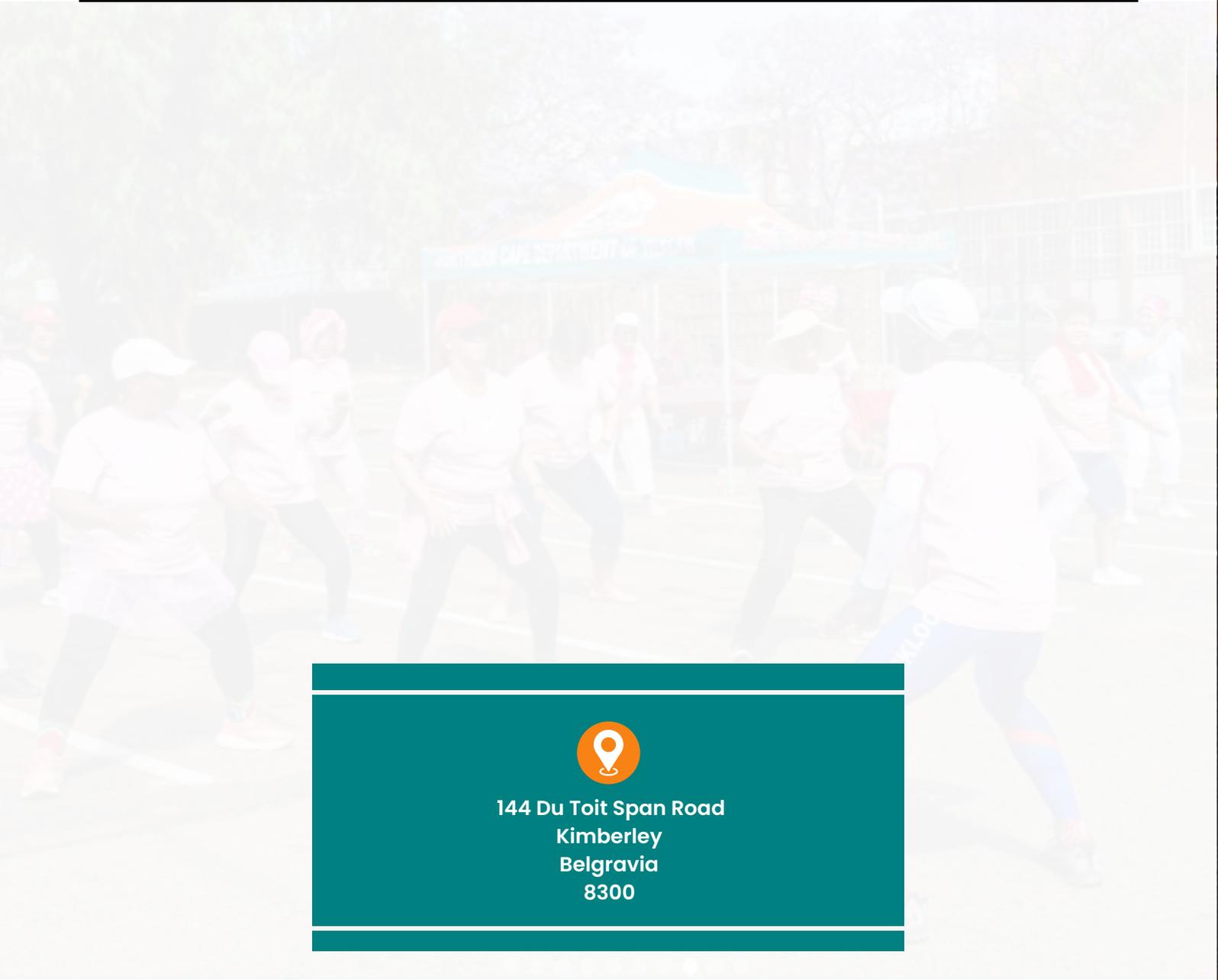


WORLD KIDNEY DAY | 12 MARCH 2026

- Check blood pressure regularly: High blood pressure is a leading cause of kidney disease.
- Monitor blood sugar: Diabetes is another major risk factor.
- Get kidney function tests: Especially if you have risk factors like family history, hypertension, or diabetes.
- Watch your weight: Maintaining a healthy weight reduces strain on kidneys.

Health Calendar 2026

April 2026	
Health Awareness Month	
2	World Autism Awareness Day
7	World Health Day
17	World Haemophilia Day
24 - 30	African Vaccination Week
25	World Malaria Day



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