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Health Deputy Minister commits to address youth concerns

Pretoria: The Deputy Minister of Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has vowed to address a number of concerns related to access to health services raised by the young people of Qwa-Qwa, in the Free State Province.

A number of young people QwaQwa and surrounding communities who met with Dr Dhlomo and the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu in Phuthadithjaba Multi-Purpose Centre today (Monday) during their visit to the area as part of a month-long World AIDS Day build-up activities, who told him that some of the local clinics are still behind with the implementation of Youth-friendly health services (YFHS) interventions.

The YFHS interventions are promising, cost-effective approaches to delivering sexual and reproductive services that cater to the developmental needs of young people to meet the sexual reproductive health needs, including regular screening and testing for HIV/AIDS, STIs and other health conditions.

The event organised under the banner of **YOLO Campaign**, (abbreviated as You Only Live Once), was also meant to encourage young people, mostly between the age of 15 and 24, irrespective of the gender to protect themselves against social ills and COVID-19 pandemic through vaccination and observing preventative measures, especially as we approaching festive season.

The YOLO Campaign was developed to address the social and behavioural drivers of HIV, minimise sexual behaviours that expose young people to HIV infections and unplanned pregnancies by enhancing and developing specific social and life skills.

“I listened to young people of Qwa-Qwa and take all their concerns seriously because I am aware this programme was launched and does exist in our health facilities, mainly in clinics. Thus, I will assess if we do have similar complaints elsewhere in the country to ensure that we don't address this in a fragmentary manner”, said Deputy Minister Dhlomo

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