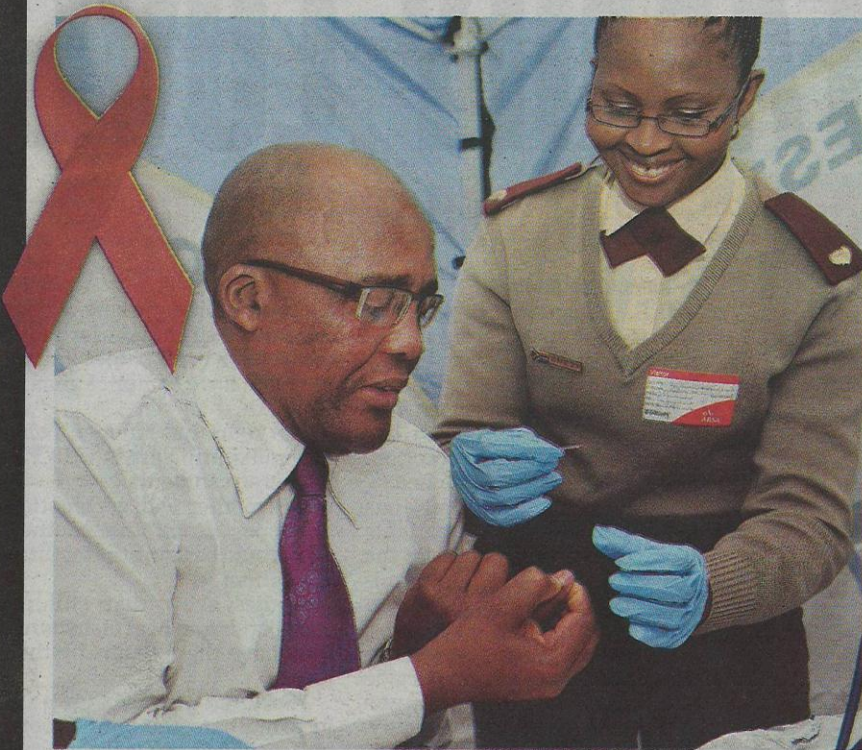


SUN HEALTH



DOING WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

WE'RE GETTING THE MESSAGE



Getting tested, like Minister Aaron Motsoaledi is doing, will help you to prevent infection in the future.

Photo by Lerato Maduna

By NJABULO NGCOBO

YESTERDAY was World Aids Day, and the good news is that research shows people in Mzansi and surrounding countries are getting the message when it comes to being infected, and are starting to behave responsibly.

This is according to the Joburg-based Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication.

The rise in responsibility is one of the important findings to come out of Soul City's OneLove campaign, an ongoing regional programme aimed at reducing new HIV infections and related deaths.

The organisation released the findings ahead of World Aids Day.

The OneLove campaign was launched in 2008 to shift social behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa and reinforce positive sexual behaviour.

Its aim was to help reduce

the habit of having multiple sexual partners as well as reduce new HIV infections.

Having multiple partners is the main driver of the spread of the HIV disease in many African countries and the campaign used Soul City's mass media platforms including TV, radio, print and social mobilisation programmes in communities.

"Our evaluation, conducted by the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, so far shows that the campaign has been very successful in terms of reach, reception and impact," said Soul City's CEO, Lebo Ramafoko.

"There've been significant gains being shown with regards to the dangers of multiple sexual partners, as well as knowledge and behaviour change related to condom use and HIV testing."

The programme's research was carried out in

eight regional countries including Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"This campaign shows the way in terms of what can be achieved when there is enough political and social will, as well as careful planning and execution when dealing with a crisis of this nature.

"Indeed, it is only because of united effort and resources of communities across Africa and the world, that we can successfully stop the HIV pandemic," said Ramafoko.

Minister of Health Aaron Motsoaledi said that they have evidence that communication helps with prevention and it is important to share information.

"I am pleased that we are talking about prevention and the healthcare system must rely on prevention of diseases and promotion of health," he said.