

5 000 new HIV/Aids infections surfacing daily



Professor Salim Karim



Professor Khangelani Zuma



Dr Zweli Mkhize

Internationally acclaimed Aids scientist, Professor Salim Karim said the time is ripe to renew the fight against HIV/Aids.

Karim is the director at the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) which is situated near the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine in Durban. He said at the South African Aids Conference at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre last week, that people cannot afford to be complacent.

"About 5 000 new infections surfaces everyday across the world. Research in 2017 showed that there were 37 million people around the globe living with HIV/Aids and that a third of infections came from South Africa, Nigeria and India respectively. Being complacent is dangerous," said Karim.

According to Professor Khangelani Zuma from the Human Sciences Research Council, women were getting more infected than men.

"There were about 7.9 million people living with HIV, but only about 62 percent of them were on anti-retrovirals. 62 000 children younger than 2 years-old were HIV positive.

Lots of work still needs to be done to reduce the HIV/Aids statistics," said Zuma.

Department of Health Minister, Dr Zweli Mkhize, said it was important for people who were HIV negative to remain that way. He lauded the South African and global scientists for the vital roles they play to win the battle against HIV/Aids.

Mkhize said the late child activist, Nkosi Johnson, who succumbed to Aids, was not afraid to speak about the impact Aids had on him. Several years ago, Nkosi addressed the audience at an international Aids conference in Durban. Constitutional Court judge, Edwin Cameron told the audience that he was privileged to get antiretroviral drugs on his medical aid to control Aids.

When the government, under the leadership of former President Thabo Mbeki reacted slowly to provide antiretroviral drugs at state hospitals and clinics to Aids patients, Judge Cameron urged the government to change its stance so that millions of people stricken with Aids could be saved. When President Jacob Zuma was at the helm, poor patients suffering from Aids were able to collect their antiretroviral drugs at hospitals and clinics.