

What's the purpose of making people sicker?

Statement by Clr Pat Brugman- Richards - DA spokesperson on Health in Joburg

The Democratic Alliance in Johannesburg has discovered that the City's Health Department is no longer receiving the grant from Gauteng Province to provide for treatment of HIV including the provision of ARVs. "This leads to the question: What's the purpose of making people with HIV sicker?" asked Clr Pat Brugman-Richards, the DA's spokesperson for Health in the City.

"Both National and Provincial Government have set aside funds to continue the roll out of programmes to deal with HIV+ people and this includes the dispensing of Anti-retrovirals. The City of Johannesburg has entered into a partnership with the NGO 'Right to Care.' There are now 8 sites within Johannesburg to treat and counsel HIV+ clients. We were hopeful that there would be an increase in at least 3 more sites," said Brugman-Richards.

"I have to ask what happened to the more than R190 million that Province alone said they were going give to combating HIV? Surely Johannesburg is entitled to some part of that money, as well as part of the more than R2 billion that National government has set aside for the same fight?"

"One cannot stop treatment for HIV, as this can lead to drug resistance when the ARV medications are started again. Lack of funds, in a programme as vital as this one, harkens back to the days when HIV and AIDS were denied," added Brugman-Richards.

"It is far more important that people get their ARVs, than for us and government to go round and round in circles," said Brugman-Richards. "If the money is available release it in a sustainable and lasting manner. Stop hoarding it and only parcel it out when it is politically advantageous to do so. People are suffering unnecessarily."

**For more information contact:
Clr Pat Brugman-Richards
082-569-4452**