



community safety & liaison

Department :
Community Safety and Liaison
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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MEDIA INVITE

TO : ALL MEDIA
DATE : 13 June 2013
ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS AND PR WIRE

BUILDING A UNITED FRONT AGAINST WHOONGA AND OTHER DRUGS

KWAZULU-NATAL Community Safety and Liaison Department, in a decisive move against the scourge of the dangerous drug known as Whoonga which has swept through most townships in recent years, has launched a campaign targeted at the pushers and distributors of the drug.

The campaign also seeks to warn communities about the dangers of this and other drugs and also to mobilise them against drugs.

Spearheaded and driven by the department's Head of Department, Mr. Ronnie Bhengu, the Department has conceived of a plan to identify, name and shame households where the drug is sold in communities under the banner of "Building A United Front Against Whoonga Campaign".

Whoonga is a deadly drug, not only to the physical health of the user, but users of the drug are known for stealing whatever they get hold of at their homes and neighbours to satisfy a never ending craving.

Whoonga is a potent drug comprising of a mixture of cocaine, antiviral tablets that treat the HIV/Aids disease, Rutex, which kills mice and dagga. It is very addictive and users get cravings in a short space of time, thus pushing users to risk anything to lay their hands on the drug.

The Department has decided to pilot a programme wherein distributors and sellers of the drug in communities will be identified, shamed and their details will be channelled to the police and to the HOD discreetly.

The project will be piloted in the township of Chesterville and surrounding areas which cover four wards in the Cato Manor, Umkhubane area, from the 15th to the 17th of June, 2013.

The three day programme will see, among others, the local community, police and other local political leadership marching to the households identified where they will be told to stop distributing or selling Whoonga.

Explaining the motivation behind the campaign Bhengu said: "As the Department we want to empower communities against the scourge of Whoonga by identifying and shaming families and individuals who distribute or sell this drug and other illegal substances".

"For now the campaign is a political one where the community will be warned about the dangers of Whoonga and its devastating effects. Only the collection of information will be clandestine and confidential, the rest of the problem will be high profile," said Bhengu.

Bhengu said after piloting the campaign in Chesterville, it will be taken to other areas throughout the province.

On the June 15 and June 16 2013 members of the community, who are part of stakeholder groups as well as police will visit the homes of people identified as dealing in Whoonga where they will be told to stop this deadly activity and join the United Front Against Whoonga Campaign. Subsequently, if they persist the police and the law will take its cause.

On the 17th of June, there will be a motorcade involving community leaders and religious leaders and will visit some of the drug hotspots in Chesterville and surroundings. It will start at the Chesterville Youth Centre and end up at the Chesterville Sports Grounds where locals will be addressed by all major stakeholders. It will also feature a soccer game between the police and members of the community.

While members of the community are expected to identify Whoonga distributors and sellers, special volunteers have been selected to gather intelligence. The campaign will be led by local police and be centred on the councillors of the four wards, including 24, 30, 29 and 101 in Umkhumbane.

The details for Saturday and Sunday are as follows:

Venue: Chesterville Youth Centre

Date; 15 and 16 June 2013

Time: 12h00pm

The details for Monday are as follows:

Venue: Chesterville Youth Centre

Date: 17 June 2013

Time: 09: 00

All media houses are invited.

Ends

For more information on this campaign, please call Mr Ronnie Bhengu @ 076-4132177.