

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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Health Department celebrates 10th Anniversary of MomConnect to reduce maternal and child mortality rates in SA

Pretoria: The Department of Health in collaboration with various stakeholders in the sector will on Thursday, 19 September commemorate the 10th Anniversary of MomConnect – one of the flagship programmes launched to transform maternal and child health to reduce maternal and child mortality in South Africa. *MomConnect* is a mobile technology to provide pregnant women with vital prenatal, during and post-natal information as well as prioritising maternal and child health using mobile phones.

According to the World Health Organization, maternal mortality remains unacceptably high, and almost 287 000 women died during pregnancy and childbirth in 2020. More than 90% of all maternal deaths occurred in low and lower middle-income countries in this period, and most could have been prevented.

South Africa's maternal mortality ratio has declined between 2014 and 2024 from 125 per 100,000 live births to 100.6 per 100,000 live births. On the other hand, child mortality rates have also declined from 747 child deaths per 1000 live births to 30,7 child deaths per 1000 live births between 2002 and 2022.

Since its launch in 2014, almost 5 million mothers utilising public antenatal services have registered on the MomConnect platform in over 95% of public health facilities. Mothers receive health and pregnancy-related information until their baby turns two years, can use the platform to seek healthcare guidance through an automated chatbot or a human-operated text-based helpdesk, and can provide feedback about the health services they receive.

Through MomConnect, the public health system has seen an improved Antenatal Care (ANC) attendance by pregnant mothers, children vaccination coverage, increased breastfeeding outcomes and increased use of family planning services amongst mothers.

Amongst stakeholders expected to attend the commemorative event, include national and provincial health department's political principals, representatives from Reach Digital Health (formerly known as Praekelt.org), Johnson & Johnson, Elma Philanthropies, PEPFAR, Discovery Health, Meta, Rockefeller Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO, Mobile Cellphone Providers, etc.

Members of the media are invited to the event are as follows:

Date: Thursday, 19 September 2024
Venue: Radisson Hotel & Convention Centre, Johannesburg, O.R. Tambo Airport
Time: 12h30

For RSVP, Ms reen Manyuha 060 567 1556/ 0824405676. Ireen.Manyuha@gauteng.gov.za

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