

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR ALD TANIA CAMPBELL  
AT THE MARCH AGAINST ILLEGAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCIES**

**Greetings to the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo**

**Gauteng Health MEC Dr Nomathemba Mokgethi**

**Members of the Mayoral Committee**

**Civil Society Organisations**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

**Good Morning,**

Today we are gathered here to educate our residents and raise awareness about the prevalent issue of illegal abortions.

Deputy Minister Dhlomo, let me take this opportunity to welcome you and the MEC to the City of Ekurhuleni. Thank you for bringing this important campaign to our City.

It saddens me that women still choose unsafe and illegal methods to terminate unwanted and unplanned pregnancies despite the government having made options of safe free health facilities available to communities.

Programme director, I must highlight that there is no reason to validate some of the choices made by women to terminate pregnancies at illegal, unhygienic facilities. There are over 300 free public health facilities providing safe termination of pregnancy services in our country. This is to ensure that we cater for all women in our society.

Since 1996, government made abortion legal, therefore in 2022 women should not carry the burden associated with abortion and must be encouraged to start using government facilities which are of high quality medical and safety standards.

As defined by the World Health Organisation, illegal abortion is a procedure for terminating a pregnancy that is performed by an individual lacking the necessary skills in an environment that does not conform to minimal medical standards or both.

Even in our country and communities most, if not all, illegal abortions are performed by individuals who are NOT medical experts, and this puts the lives of women at risk.

Studies have shown that women who seek out illegal abortions face serious and life-threatening side effects or even death.

Following unsafe abortion procedures, women usually experience severe consequences like serious infections which can affect their fertility or reproductive health on a long-term basis.

I want to take this opportunity to urge all women to stop seeking illegal and unsafe termination of pregnancies.

Deputy Minister, sexual education must be enhanced in our schools especially educational programs targeting adolescent teenage girls as they are the most vulnerable groups.

As a society, we all have the responsibility to educate young girls about various contraceptive methods including emergency contraception that are at their disposal while making our health centres more patient-friendly in these areas.

Let us encourage our children to stop having unprotected sexual intercourse as this may lead to STIs and HIV infections which can negatively affect their future.

I believe that if we apply this principle of sexual education in our homes, schools and churches, the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions could be much lower.

To all civil society organisations championing the issue of sexual and reproductive health, thank you for the amazing work that you do to empower our residents with the accurate information they need to make the right decisions regarding their sexual health.

I thank you.