

## BLM HOSTS HAST AND WORLD TB DAY COMMEMORATION



The Blouberg Local Municipality in partnership with the Department of Health and Anova Health Institute hosted HIV/AIDS/STI/Tuberculosis (HAST) and World TB Commemoration event to raise awareness about devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB and HIV.

World TB day is an annual event commemorated on March 24. The theme for 2022 is : INVEST IN ACTION TO END TB NOW! SAVE LIVES, which calls for urgent need to invest in resources to strengthen the fight against TB and achieve the commitments to end TB. In 2021, 274 TB cases were confirmed in Blouberg.

Health care practitioners conducted awareness education about TB and HIV. In Commemoration of TB Day community members whom stay with TB patients were encouraged to visit the nearest health care facility for a free TB screening and HIV testing, all children under five years to be screened and given TB prevention for six months and a request for family members to care and support TB patients so that they are able to complete the six months TB treatment.

Delivering a keynote address, Blouberg Local Municipality Mayor, Her Worship Cllr Maria Thamaga whom these topics are close to her heart and has, for many years volunteered as a caregiver and headed an organization; Women In Partnership Against HIV/AIDS at local and district level commended the Department of Health for its continued efforts in raising awareness concerning diseases threatening the livelihoods of communities and the preventative measures.

" We were one of the first groups of caregivers back then, and HIV/AIDS subject was a taboo. Many of the people who got infected couldn't accept their status and were even scared to disclose due to the stigma which negatively affected their wellbeing. We are happy that our government has

developed strategies to fight TB and HIV/AIDS and educating our communities about the scourge and a huge progress has been made in responding to these issues".

The Mayor called for unity in the fight against HIV/AIDS, encouraged those who are living with the virus to take their medication and those that are not aware of theirs to get tested.

" Let us support those who are living with the virus and continue to fight to end stigma. HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence but a manageable virus. Those that are living with the virus continue taking your medication and we encourage those who have not tested to so, so that you know where you stand. Practice safe sex".