



## **Grape-scented purple condoms to make safe sex fun for students**

### **Launch of coloured and scented condoms on 12 March 2015**

*Soweto, 12 March 2015* – From today safe sex among students will become more fun as millions of fruit scented condoms start making their way into the South African student population.

Students from 429 campuses across all public Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVETs) and universities will gain access to the coloured and scented Choice condoms.

As part of the annual *First Things First* campaign launched at South West Gauteng College today, purple-coloured and grape-scented condoms are the first phase of the rollout for the new public sector condoms.

This initiative comes at a time when HIV infection rates among South Africans remains among highest in the world – 370 000 new infections occurred during 2012, or about 1000 a day.

National Department of Health (NDoH) was concerned by condom usage data from the HSRC Household Survey of 2012. The survey showed that 53% of South Africans aged 15 and older had never used a condom with their most recent partner. Also, condom use at last sex had decreased between 2008 and 2012.

According to South Africa's largest public sector condom distributor Society for Family Health's (SFH) parent body Population Services International (PSI), one of the reasons for the decline is that condom supplies in the market currently do not meet the need for condoms despite public health efforts to encourage condom usage.

Society for Family Health has been commissioned by NDoH to spearhead the distribution of the new coloured and scented condoms for the student population.

"This is a very exciting time for us because we are constantly driven to finding new and innovative ways for keeping young people protected from HIV and STIs and helping them stay healthy," said SFH director Scott Billy.

Current perceptions about contracting HIV also play a role in low condom usage. According to the HSRC Household Survey of 2012, over three quarters of the people in South Africa believe that they definitely or probably will not get infected with HIV.

SFH deputy director Miriam Mhazo said although this was a detrimental combination of factors, programmes like the one launched today were opportunities to remedy the situation.

"Whilst it is important to heighten people's risk perception, exploring new ways to encourage condom use, such as making good quality scented condoms freely available, puts us in a position to re-popularise condom usage among our youth."

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