

# Algoa FM Big Walk invests R380,000 in upgrades to EC cancer services

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Cancer facilities in the Eastern Cape will be receiving upgrades to the value of R380,000 after the official cheque handover to Igazi Foundation, beneficiary of the 2015 Algoa FM Big Walk for Cancer.



From left is the Eastern Cape MEC of Health Dr Pumza Dyantyi and Managing Director of Algoa FM, Dave Tiltmann.

Close to 12,000 people flocked to Summerstrand Port Elizabeth on Saturday, 31 October 2015. The 5km walk is in its 18th year and annually hosted by Algoa FM, the popular commercial radio station that broadcasts in the Eastern Cape and Garden Route.

Participants walk in memory and support of people affected by cancer.

According to Dr Neil Littleton, the founding member of Igazi, the funds would be used to support the ongoing upgrades and improvements of medical equipment and other facilities at the Oncology wards at the Provincial Hospital.

“We’ve been successfully hosting this event for the past 17 years in support of people affected by cancer, but since we partnered with the Eastern Cape Department of Health last year we were able to make a greater impact through the two-month-long cancer awareness campaign on Algoa FM that preceded the event,” says Managing Director at Algoa FM, Dave Tiltmann.

Accompanied by the Algoa FM team, the Eastern Cape Department of Health hosted numerous health and cancer screenings at shopping malls in and around Nelson Mandela Bay including Kwanobuhle, Kenako and Cleary Park Mall. Over a thousand screenings were done collectively at the three activations, of which each activation were three hours in duration.

The tests were all free and included hypertension, diabetes, blood pressure, glucose levels, cervical and prostate cancer, breast self-examination, and TB screenings and tests. Free screenings were also offered during registration.

“The interest received from the community during these screening sessions showed that there is a need for these services to be taken into the communities. People want to live healthier lifestyles, but need the support and knowledge to do so. Through our partnership with Algoa FM on their Big Walk for Cancer we were able to increase awareness, reach communities directly and now we are able continue investing in upgrading cancer health services in the region,” says Eastern Cape Health MEC Dr. Pumza Dyantyi.

“This initiative would not have been possible without the support of the community who warmly embrace the event every

year,” says Tiltmann.

“This event is evidence of what can be achieved when corporates, government, the non-profit sector and the community work together. I would like to encourage more businesses, corporations and individuals to get involved in this event in any way possible, whether through sponsorship or participation.

“Although these funds will make a big difference in continuing the upgrades to the facility, the reality is that the work required is endless and continuous support is necessary,” says Littleton.

According to the 2010 statistics of National Cancer Registry of South Africa, one in six South African men and one in seven South African women will become cancer sufferers.

“Fortunately more people are surviving cancer here than ever before, due to better technologies and access to healthcare services. Although this is heartening, it remains a challenge to continue to educate and diagnose early in order to improve outcomes,” says Littleton.

Planning for this year’s Big Walk for Cancer event is already underway.

“Working with the Eastern Cape Department of Health, we will once again offer free screenings in major shopping malls and at registration, and hope to reach even more people with these screenings,” says Tiltmann.

This year’s 5km walk will take place on Saturday, 29 October, in Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth.

“Similar to previous years, the event promises every participant a unique experience, including competitions where early entrants can win big in the lead-up to the event. Walkers are encouraged to dress up with family and friends in their craziest pink outfits.

“En route, walkers participate in fun and memorable activities while enjoying the picturesque view of the beach. The adventure finishes on a high note with live entertainment. It is a special day and certainly a highlight on the Eastern Cape calendar,” says Marketing Manager of Algoa FM, Toinette Koumpan.

More details will be made available at the launch of the event in September this year.

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