

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES PROVIDING ART SERVICES.

THROUGH: REGIONAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND FACILITY SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICERS

RE: SCALE UP OF TEST AND START STRATEGY IN ALL ART PROVIDING FACILITIES.

The Ministry of Health through the Swaziland National AIDS Program (SNAP) is pleased to announce the scale up of the Test and Start strategy to **all People living with HIV in all ART initiating Facilities as from the 1st October 2016.**

Test and Start is a strategy that aims to initiate all people living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy (ART) as soon as possible (preferably within 2-8 weeks) after the diagnosis of HIV infection irrespective of CD4 count. The goal of this strategy is to achieve epidemic control of HIV by 2020 and is in keeping with the King's vision of an AIDS free generation by 2022. Swaziland has been partially implementing Test and Start in children < 5years, HIV positive patients co-infected with TB, and in Pregnant and Lactating women.

Test and Start has been recommended by the World Health Organization and international studies such as START, TEMPRANO and HTN 52, and local studies; MaxART& EAAA have shown that early initiation of ART is beneficial for all PLHIV and is feasible to do in our settings.

Facilities are expected to smoothly transition and implement Test and Start from the 1st October 2016 by offering ART to all HIV positive people and initiating those that are willing and ready. SNAP will be facilitating this scale up through the Regional Health Management Team and the Regional Partners. Please see attachment for further implementation guidance.

Your cooperation to make this initiative a success will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Dr Velephi Okello

Deputy Director Clinical Services – Swaziland Ministry of Health

