

So what is the HCT Campaign?

HCT stands for ***HIV Counselling and Testing*** and that is what the campaign is all about. The national campaign, which aims to mobilise 15 million South Africans to test their status before June 2011, was launched by the South African Government in April this year. The Deputy Chairman of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), Mark Heywood, has said it is the “biggest the world has ever seen”.

The campaign goes hand-in-hand with Government’s actions to increase access to treatment, care and support for those who are HIV infected.

The HIV test, being offered free at all public health facilities, is one of a set of wellness tests intended to raise awareness about lifestyle diseases and encourage people to take responsibility for their own health and wellness.

This individual and collective responsibility is highlighted by the theme of the campaign: ***“I am responsible. We are responsible. South Africa is taking responsibility”***. President Zuma took a public test on the day of the launch, and revealed his status to the nation in an effort to break down the stigma and discrimination that is still so often associated with the virus.

The business sector has also stepped up to the challenge. Led by the South African Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS (SABCOHA), companies have co-developed and agreed to a strategy that will mobilise the resources and the skills of the business sector to meaningfully support Government in achieving its targets. Prominent business leaders stood shoulder to shoulder with Government officials at the national launch in Gauteng in April, as well as at the subsequent provincial launches, to demonstrate the support of the business sector.

The business sector’s plan for realising the HCT targets has committed South African companies to testing two million of the 15 million targeted by Government. This includes employees, dependents and members of local communities.

It is your responsibility too. Find out today where you can go for an HIV test by sending an SMS to 31771 with HIV and the postal code of the area where you live, and you will receive the names of the public health facilities in your area that offer the wellness tests, or call the AIDS helpline on 0800 012 322.

