

HEALTH

**KHUTALA COLLIERY SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL CLINIC TO PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICES TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES**



*Our Khutala Colliery is situated approximately 60 kilometres west of Witbank in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Khutala, which is one of the biggest underground coal mines in the world, has been operating since 1986. A large portion of its workforce live in the residential area of Phola, which lies about 38 kilometres from central Witbank and eight kilometres from Ogies. In the past, neither Phola, nor Ogies had a clinic to render health care services to its residents. The Department of Health, becoming concerned about the high level of ill health in the area, planned to build a clinic in Phola but adequate funding was not available. Once aware of the situation, Khutala management quickly stepped in and offered a helping hand.*



► HIV/AIDS blood testing at the Phola clinic

Khutala provided the funding and sponsored the equipment necessary for the construction of the Phola clinic. With this support, what was planned to be a one-room clinic in Phola has been revamped into a facility big enough to support the various health needs of the community. Currently more than 3400 patients per month receive treatment at the clinic.

The clinic is now playing a significant role in offering primary healthcare, GP consultations, rehabilitation, maternity, diagnostic and curative services to support and enhance the health and well-being of people in and around the colliery. Many residents from both Ogies and Phola are provided with free healthcare. In addition, the clinic has the facilities to offer home-based care, with links to Direct Observation and Treatment (DOT) for TB patients, and also to cater for terminally ill patients in the area, including those infected by HIV/AIDS.

The clinic is managed and operated by the Department of Health, but Khutala continues to take a keen interest in the services it provides to the community and offers further support where appropriate.

For example, in February 2004, the Department of Health and Khutala again joined forces to organise a series of community education presentations in Phola to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Phola has been identified by the Department as having one of the highest rates of sexually transmitted disease infections in the Mpumalanga region. With free entertainment to attract people to the presentations, audiences were provided with pamphlets, information brochures and condoms.



► Community health education program

By supporting initiatives such as development of the Phola clinic and community health education programs, Khutala Colliery is helping to limit the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on our workforce and others in the local community.