

Chirumhanzu gets

Herald Reporter

PACT Zimbabwe has opened an HIV/Aids voluntary counselling and testing centre at St Theresa Mission Hospital in Chirumhanzu District.

Ruvheneko Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre is the first to be opened in a rural setting.

St Theresa Mission Hospital was also the first rural based institution to implement the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programme in 2001.

Statistics indicate that the project had been successful as more than 80 percent of mothers were volunteering to be tested.

It offers home-based care, orphan care and post HIV testing services to ensure that people live positively after testing HIV positive.

Male and female home-based caregivers at the centre will be provided with care kits consisting of gloves, bed sheets, towels, napkins, germ and stain removers and detergents.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Midlands Governor Cde Cephass Msipa said Government had shown commitment in fighting HIV and Aids by being the first country in the world to introduce a National Aids Trust Fund.

"The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare has put in place strategies to scale up the provision of health services in order to mitigate the impact of HIV cases," said Cde Msipa.

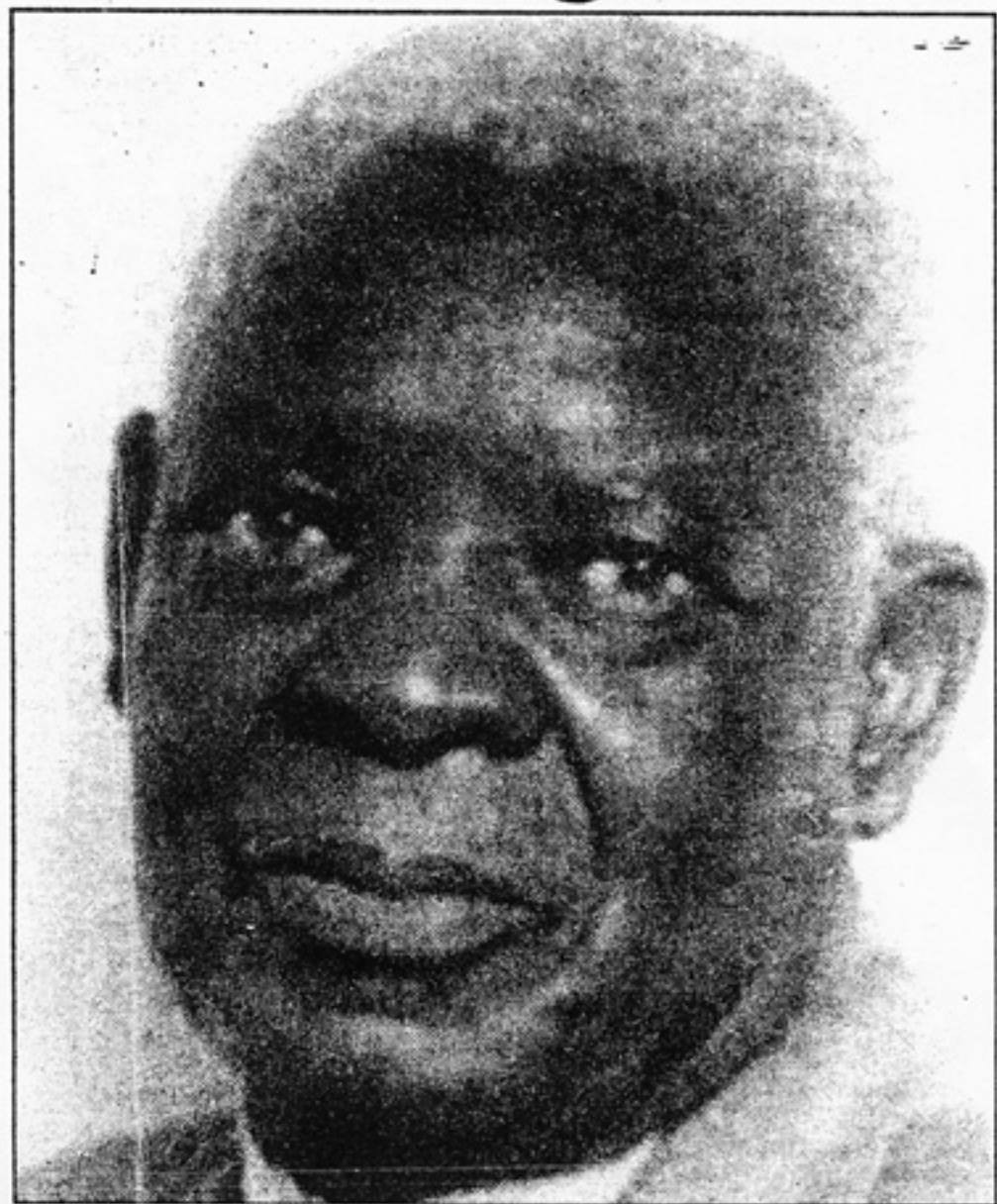
They include a multi-sectoral plan for HIV/Aids, strengthening channels in treatment of sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis and opportunistic infections, providing VCT services countrywide, preventing mother-to-child prevention and strengthening home-based and orphan care.

Cde Msipa gave \$100 000 to the hospital's maternity ward and urged Zimbabweans people in Chirumhanzu to get tested.

Knowing one's HIV status would motivate people to change their behaviour.

HIV and Aids kills more than 2 000 people every week in the country.

Aids testing centre



Cde Msipa

It is also estimated that three out of 10 pregnant women are infected with the deadly virus.

Finance and administration manager for Pact Zimbabwe, Ms Sheila Makwiranzou said more centres would soon be established at mission hospitals throughout the country.

Pact Zimbabwe has in previous years supported St Theresa's home-based care programme.

The programme has 817 clients under the care of 67 volunteer caregivers while 2 700 Aids orphans are currently receiving assistance from the project.