



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X828, PRETORIA, 0001, Civitas Building, Thabo Sehume Street, Pretoria. Enquiries: Dr AK Vilakazi Nhlapo;

Tel (012) 395 9218; Fax (012) 395 8506; email: vilakA@health.gov.za

Prof. Harry Hausler  
TB HIV Care  
25 St Georges Mall  
Cape Town  
8001

Dear Prof. Hausler

## **LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISION OF HIV / HEPATITIS PREVENTION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO USE AND INJECT DRUGS**

The mission of the South African National Department of Health (NDoH) is to improve health status through the prevention of illnesses and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and to consistently improve the healthcare delivery system by focusing on access, equity, efficiency, quality and sustainability.

The reduction of new HIV and hepatitis C infections among vulnerable populations, including people who use and inject drugs, is important to reach the goals of the End of AIDS and the Elimination of Hepatitis by 2030. As such, the NDoH recognises and supports the policy guidelines provided by the South African National Strategic Plan on HIV, TB and STIs and the National Drug Master Plan calling for the implementation of services that reduce the health risks and harms that people who use drugs experience. The guidelines and policies include access to opioid substitution therapies (OST) to heroin dependent people and programmes that provide sterile injecting equipment to people who inject drugs. These interventions are promoted by the World Health Organisation, UNAIDS, The Global Fund, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, PEPFAR and other international bodies.

Considering the above:

1. NDoH supports the provision of OST, in the form of methadone and buprenorphine programmes as maintenance, delivered in line with the current legislation and regulations and global normative guidance, to people who are dependent on heroin.
2. NDoH confirms that the provision, collection and disposal of sterile injecting equipment as part of HIV and viral hepatitis prevention services targeting people who injects drugs, is in line with national policies and legislation. The NDoH therefore supports needle and syringe programmes that follow international best practice.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Y Pillay**

**Deputy Director General: HIIV & AIDS, TB and MCWH**

**Date:**

18/2/18