

Primary Pulmonary Hypertension Clinic Opened



Dr Anish Ambram, Mogie Govender, Sister Teena Chetty, Sharon Chetty, Champa Bhoola, Ragnie Moodley and Ashveer J Gobind.

A fun-loving attitude camouflages the very serious battle Sharon Chetty, an Umhlatuzana mother of two, is fighting daily.

Chetty had been diagnosed with Primary Pulmonary Hypertension (PPH), the disease affects the small blood vessels in the lungs, which leads to heart failure. Initial symptoms of PPH may be very minor and diagnosis may be delayed for several years until symptoms worsen. Typical symptoms may include shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, fainting, weakness, ankle swelling, bluish lips and chest pain. It is difficult to detect PPH in a routine medical examination even when the disease has progressed, the signs and symptoms may be confused with other conditions that affect the heart and the lungs. PPH is serious and it is very important to seek the right medical treatment as soon as possible. Chetty said, "PH is a scary, complicated disease that a few people and even doctors do not know a lot about. When a newly

diagnosed patient leaves the doctor's office, he or she is most likely to remember only a small part of what the doctor said. The only thing that is left in the patient's mind is fear. I was invited to attend the seventh International PH Conference in US, where I highlighted the plight of PH in South Africa. I was later invited to speak at the first worldwide leaders Support Conference, where I interacted with support groups and queried about what has been done to assist people with this fatal disease. I feel that my purpose is to make a difference in this country. I want to see the quality of life of the PH patients improved and by all of us working holistically we can find a cure." Due to Chetty's constant drive and determination she was able to open a PH Clinic in South Africa. "There were many meetings with the Department of Health and finally after meeting with Professor Laloo who runs the largest pulmonary unit in KZN, he agreed to start a PH Clinic. The clinic officially opened last week Monday and that was one of the happiest days. I would

like to say that there is hope for PH patients therefore they must stay strong, positive, have faith and we will walk this road together," said Chetty. Cookie Moodley from Moorton who is also a PH patient was very pleased with the opening of the Clinic. She stated, "This Clinic is well equipped, the doctors work fast and efficient. None of our information is misplaced and I am grateful to Professor Omesh Laloo who assisted me in my time of need."

Chetty explained, "As a PH patient and support group leader in South Africa, I would like to make an earnest appeal to the spouses, children, family members and friends of PH patients to be absolutely supportive because it can help stabilised the patient. Any unnecessary stress, be it physical, mental or emotional most definitely aggregates the symptoms of PH."

Anyone suffering with PH or for anyone that needs information about the support group can contact Sharon Chetty on 031 403 9668 or 084 720 4496.