

# Wellness centre launched for truckers

**Rusana Philander**

TRUCK drivers in the Western Cape will for the first time also have access to a health and wellness centre.

At the centre, which is located in Bofors Circle, Epping, truck drivers are able to get tested for HIV-Aids, tuberculosis, high blood pressure and diabetes.

The centre was opened by Minister of Health Aaron Motsoaledi, on Wednesday. The opening was also attended by truck drivers.

Motsoaledi said: "People involved in the road freight industry, especially drivers, are critical to the economy. One can say

that they are the lifeblood of the economy.

"Equally, their health is important to their families and their communities. The road freight industry criss-crosses the country. The N1 links Cape Town via Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Polokwane. These routes are conducive for the transmission of HIV.

"I am very encouraged by the work done by all those associated with developing and maintaining these centres. This is a good example of private-public partnerships and I wish to say a big thank you to those that have supported this initiative, like Sida,

Mercedes-Benz, the Bargaining Council for the Road Freight Industry and the South African Business Coalition on HIV-Aids. There are good practices that we can learn from. These exist both in our country and elsewhere."

Motsoaledi said "Last year, we visited Bangalore, India, where we were impressed with the programme they are implementing with regard to HIV-Aids."

"I do hope that we will be able to review our programmes and learn from others so that we can strengthen our programmes even as we expand throughout our highway network.

"I am also meeting with the

Department of Transport to further enhance programmes such as these," the minister said.

Vincent Lepota, a truck driver from Johannesburg, said: "This centre will help us very much and it will help us a lot if we know our HIV status, because I have never had myself tested before."

According to Brad Mears, CEO of Sabcoha, the company managed 20 other wellness centres that had already been launched across the country.

"These centres can play an important role in helping the health department in getting 15 million people tested for HIV-Aids by the end of June," he said.