

NCD PATIENT ADVOCACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

SUBMITTED BY ABT ASSOCIATES

ONE MORNING IN APRIL 2012, Funani Juliet was having breakfast in her Pietersburg, South Africa home when food started to drip down the right side of her face. Her lips couldn't hold what she was eating. The retired primary school teacher looked in the mirror and saw nothing odd, but called a friend right away. The friend wanted to take her to a doctor, but Funani opted to go to church to pray.

But soon her face started to shake and became contorted to the right side. When she went to the doctor, she found out she had hypertension and high cholesterol.

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Fortunately, after two weeks on medication, her tests were normal. Unfortunately, one doctor told her to stop the drug regimen, but another doctor said she should stay on it. It was disturbing that the doctors lacked a standard protocol that would dictate the right course of treatment. Funani broke the tie herself when she remembered that before the incident, a doctor told her she should be on blood pressure medicine because of her age.

Today, she remains on treatment for hypertension, cholesterol, and arthritis and goes to a clinic for monthly checkups. She is healthy, she exercises, she attends meetings of organizations for the elderly, and she makes crafts. She is a symbol of hope, faith, and determined empowerment.

