

O: ALL MEDIA
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EMBARGO: NONE

Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Molefi Sefularo, commits to deliver a clinic in Ekuvukeni (Nongoma) by 2010

The Deputy Minister of Health in the Republic of South Africa, accompanied by the MEC for Health in KwaZulu-Natal (Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni) and a Member of Parliament (Prince BK Zulu) have answered a call for a clinic from a community of Ekuvukeni in Nongoma.

The community of Ekuvukeni had requested a clinic for their area since 1992 but this could not be done as there are two nearby clinics in the area within 6 and 12 km from the community. The Department of Health decided to give priority to other areas where people have to travel longer distances. As a result of a changing population and disease profile the Department of Health has reviewed its decision and will be building a clinic for this rural community.

The Deputy Minister and the MEC went to the area to turn a sod for a clinic to be built by 2010. They also visited other nearby hospitals (Benedictine and St Francis) where they donated computers and television sets. At St Francis Hospital, in Mahlabathini, they donated a television set to the children's ward and computers to be used by patients and staff.

"The rural communities must never feel that freedom is yet to come to them. They, like those in urban areas, need to feel that government listens and acts on their requests. It is for this reason that, today, I have come here to make a commitment to start constructing the clinic in the first quarter of 2010. The MEC is also here to ensure that a budget is set-aside and construction really resumes by this time," said Dr Sefularo at the sod turning site.

At Benedictine Hospital where NEHAWU members have reported incidences of intimidation and another staff member was shot-to death for campaigning for the African National Congress (ANC). They addressed staff and management on the unsafe working environment. The MEC called for "calm and the respect of human rights including the right to association."

"I urge our dedicated health care professionals to put the service of the people first and should not engage in petty political squabbles that result in the loss of human life. I call on the police to play their role in ensuring that our health care workers are protected from intimidation and victimisation," said the MEC, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni at Benedictine Hospital.

ENDS!

ISSUED BY:
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