

TO: ALL MEDIA
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EMBARGO: IMMEDIATELY

INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH JOIN HANDS TO ENSURE THE SICK AND HOSPITALISED CAN VOTE

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in partnership with the Department of Health has joined hands to ensure that the ill and hospitalised during elections are not denied their constitutional right to vote.

A three day workshop is currently being held in Durban (Southern Sun, Elangeni Hotel) conducted by the IEC to educate the Public Relations Officers of the Department of Health from various hospitals and clinics about the electoral process in order to equip them with information to be able to assist the hospitalised to participate in the 2009 General Elections to be held sometime this year. This workshop was initiated after discussions between the IEC and the Department of Health identified that the need to cooperate for the benefit of those who are hospitalised during elections. Opening the Workshop, the Provincial Electoral Officer; Mr. Mawethu Mosery, said; " We are grateful for the support we are receiving from the Department of Health. All of us, as South Africans and as public servants need to play a role in entrenching the hard earned democracy of our country. We believe that you are well laced to educate and inform the public about their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote. You will also help us in reaching the sick and hospitalised to exercise their democratic right to choose a government of their choice."

Reading a message from the MEC for Health, Dr Yoliswa Mbele (the Acting Head of Department) said; "The rights of individuals to make a choice during an election cannot be on the basis of their health condition at the time. Those in our hospitals during this period depend on us to protect their basic human rights including their right to vote. You are expected to ensure that our patient's rights are not taken away by time and chance."

The workshop is expected to orientate the Public Relations Officers; and Hospital Managers at a later date, on the electoral process with a view of ensuring that hospitals and clinics will be able to apply for special vote status for in-patients which is open two-days before the Election Day. The health institutions are also expected to promote registration days thus encouraging the public to go and register including health care workers.

The MEC's message concluded by quoting from the bible, Ecclesiastes 9:11

"I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

ENDS

ISSUED BY:
CORPORATE COMMUNICATION
KZN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH