

KZN Spearheads the radical transformation of emergency health services

5 September 2014

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu has described the launch of the Night Vision Aero-Medical System as the radical transformation of the emergency health services in the country.

He was reacting to the overwhelming response from the public following the launch in Richards Bay Airport on 04 September 2014. The launch was attended by MEC for Health Dr Sbongiseni Dhlomo.

The NVG is a specially designed pair of goggles that is generally used in a military environment and allows the user better visibility in night conditions. The Department of Health's aircrafts interiors have been modified and training has commenced with almost all the Richards Bay Pilots being fully trained. With the proper night-vision equipment, the crew on board the helicopter can see a person standing over 183 m away on a moonless, cloudy night.

This service, which is used mostly by the first world high-tech Air Forces, is a first by a government department for KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and the African continent.

Its availability will greatly improve access and the delivery of advanced medical and trauma care to our patients and victims of motor vehicle collisions and those trapped in mountains. It has also resulted in the increase of the aeromedical hours of operations.

"Shortly after political liberation, the people of this country voted into office a government that took responsibility

to monitor and account for the quality of health services to all the people residing in urban and rural areas.

Since

1994, this democratic has been spearheading the one quality healthcare system which is aimed at eradicating the

inequalities in the provision of health wherein delivery was organized according apartheid ideologies of racial division."

"The NVG system will assist in bringing essential health services to all our people, especially those in far flung areas which were previously neglected. That is what our constitution pledges and that was what heroes and heroines of our struggle envisaged for South Africa."

"The KZN government want to ensure that by 2030 the Province of KwaZulu-Natal becomes a prosperous Province, with healthy, skilled and secure people, acting as a gateway to Africa and the world."

"However, we are cognisant of the fact that we cannot achieve this alone. That is why we are committed to forming partnerships with other stakeholders. I want to express my appreciation to all the role-players who are involved in this ground-breaking medical system. I can mention the Red Cross Air Mercy Services, the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) and other important players such as health professionals across all categories. "

"Immediately after attaining democracy we set out on the path of transformation of society but few of us could imagine how complex and difficult it would be to ensure universal access to healthcare services. What is clear today however, is that the burden of ensuring universal access to healthcare falls on healthcare professionals - who actually bring services to the people."

"As government we understand that whether you change the linen or stitch up wounds, cook the food or dispense the medicines, it is in your hands to help build public health institutions worthy of all those who gave

their lives for the dream of democracy.”

“Though we have only just set out on the long and difficult path, we can take pride as a nation that the foundation for quality healthcare service has been laid in the few short years of our freedom.

“This emphasis on essential health care for all has led to the building and upgrading of hundreds of hospitals and new clinics around the province with the provincial government spending more than R7 billion from 2009 to date.”

According to the Department Health, the establishment of Landing Zones and the refurbishment of Landing Strips is underway. The following hospitals already accessible to receive and dispatch night flights:

Eshowe, KwaMagwaza (Melmoth), Ulundi Airfield (Nkonjeni), Ceza, Vryheid, Itshelejuba (Pongola), St Benedictine (Nongoma), Hlabisa, Mkuze Airfield (Bethesda), Mosvold, Manguzi, Mseleni, Dukuduku (St Lucia), Ngwelezane

Ends

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