

**SPEECH BY KZN HEALTH MEC, DR SIBONGISENI DHLOMO ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE DRIEFONTEIN CLINIC**

10 June 2010

Programme Director

Inkosi TR Khumalo – Ndabezitha!

Izinduna kanye noMkhandlu weNkosi

Our new District Manager Mama Zulu – welcome to the Uthukela Health District!

Management of the Driefontein Clinic – Sister Ndebele and colleagues

Umphakathi wonke waseDriefontein namaphethelo!

Let me start by expressing our great appreciation to Inkosi uMzilikazi kaMashobane for reminding and inviting us to come and attend to the matter of the official opening of this historic clinic, an event that is long overdue.

I come here bearing the good wishes our Honourable Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize who is supposed to be rightfully here as he is the one who initiated the construction of the current structure when he was serving this province as the MEC for Health.

Lest we forget, I also want to recognize and thank all the people who worked tirelessly with Inkosi uMntungwa to further his dreams to have a health care institution anchored here in November 1978. I hope all those people are still alive today or that they have family members representing them here today. We thus acknowledge the contribution of:

- Inkosi M.S. Khumalo
- Mr. Langa from Burford
- Mr. T Shabalala from Pietermaritzburg

We also acknowledge Mr. Msiya from Mathondwane who as a builder assisted Inkosi Khumalo with the drawings of a 4 – room plan for the initial clinic.

I am also told that around the time the initial clinic was built, there were no concrete blocks in Ladysmith and that these were fetched from Escourt by community members using their own cars, particularly:

- Mr. Nhlabathi from Watershed
- Mr. Hlatshwayo from Moba
- Mr. Mkhwanazi from Hlathini

Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that a health care facility is not complete without nurses because nurses are the backbone of our health care system in the province and in the country as a whole. We thus wish to thank the first batch of nurses that operated this facility:

- Professional Nurse, Sr. V. Miya.
- Enrolled Nurse Mngomezulu, as well as
- General Assistant nurse, C.N. Mathebula

We are all elated today to have a revamped health care facility that was started, like we said by the then MEC for Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize and completed in 2006 under the tenure of my predecessor, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni.

Today we are joining Inkosi Khumalo and all the Isizwe samaNtungwa in the celebration to officially open and handover the new clinic structure that started operating in May 2008 with the following personnel.

- 5 x Prof Nurses
- 2 x Enrolled Nurses
- 1x Enrolled Nurse Assistant
- 2 x HIV/AIDS Counsellors
- 1x General Orderly
- 1x Grounds man
- 4 x Security

We today appeal to Inkosi Khumalo in all his meetings to remind abaNtungwa and all the people residing here to make use of the services

offered in this clinic. The services that are offered at this clinic are the following:

- High Blood Pressure testing
- Sugar diabetes testing
- HIV Testing and Counselling
- Asthma
- Psychiatric services
- Family Planning
- well-baby clinic
- Antenatal Care (prenatal and postnatal services)
- Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
- Sexual Reproductive Health (e.g. Sexually Transmitted Infections)
- PAP Smear
- First Counselling for Trauma (e.g. rape, motor vehicle accidents, violence)

We are open 7 days a week and therefore cover the catchment area for all days of need by the communities that are settled around the Driefontein Clinic. Among these communities are Burford, Baldaskraal, Mathondwane, Emahlathini, Emgazini, Engogo and many others that constitute Driefontein.

As Government we are mostly concerned about pregnant women who do not attend antenatal clinics. We are saying that mothers should know that there is nothing we can do to save their babies if they only surface to our facilities when delivery is due.

Prevention is the key to all ailments! As the Minister of Health – Dr Aaron Motsoaledi – always say in his speeches and addresses: Prevention is better than cure! Ukuvikela isifo noma ingozi kungcono kunokwelapha isifo esesingenile kumuntu. Let us try and live with this noble philosophy of life, so that our clinic is over-burdened with ailments that we could still have avoided and prevented.

We are also here to remind our people that help for all the HIV positive individuals is now available as announced on the World AIDS day 2009 by the President of the Republic, Hon Jacob Zuma when he called for:

- A massive campaign to mobilize all South Africans to get tested for HIV and to ensure that every South African knows their HIV status.
- Increased access to treatment for children under one year of age that test positive for HIV. This will contribute significantly towards the quality of life for infected children and reduction of infant mortality

- Patients presenting with both TB and HIV infection to be initiated on ART if their CD4 count is 350 or less shifting from the old guidelines of initiating treatment when CD4 count is less than 200.
- TB and HIV to be treated under one roof.
- All pregnant HIV positive women with a CD4 count of 350 or with symptoms regardless of CD4 count to have access to treatment.
- All other HIV positive, pregnant women with higher CD4 counts to be put on treatment at fourteen weeks of pregnancy to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV.
- All the health institutions in the country to provide HIV counseling, testing and treatment.

In this area, we also want to appeal to **Traditional leaders to:**

- Use their power and authority in communities to promote HIV Counselling and Testing Campaign, and
- To speak against stigma and discrimination of those who are infected.

We also have messages for all the womenfolk on ways in which they can tackle **BREAST CANCER**. Here, we are cautioning them on the early warning signs of the presence of the breast cancer; these being:

- Changes in the shape or size of the breasts;

- One breast unusually lower than the other (nipples at different levels);
- Dimpling of the skin of the breast;
- Lump in the breast or armpit or unusual swelling in the armpit; and/ or
- A new dimpling or bleeding of the nipples

The last thing that I would like to say is that this is your property. This is your building and these are your services. The staff that works in this clinic, the building itself, the equipment and the medication that is housed in this building all belong to you for your well-being. It is thus incumbent upon you to protect all these people and things that I have mentioned. You need to make sure that staff is not violated and that their rights are not abused by people who want disorganize the services in the area. You need to make sure that nothing is stolen and taken through the backdoor. Protect this place with your lives and make sure that it stays clean and hygienic; that it has a vegetable garden where fresh produce can be planted and harvested; that the people who visit this clinic are treated with dignity and selflessness of the nurses and sisters of old.

May God bless you all. I THANK YOU