

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the re-engineering of Primary Health Care Services and launch of “new” Mobile Clinic Units at Greys Hospital
15 March 2012

Programme Director

In our quest to improve the lives of our people in all the corners of our country, we are very elated to once more make an additional contribution to the 170 mobile clinics that are operational around the KwaZulu Natal Province.

They offer a full spectrum of services that entail health promotion which includes advocacy, social mobilization, counseling, health education as well as palliative care for those with terminal illnesses.

Special emphasis is put on the promotion and prevention services, e.g. growth monitoring for children less than 5 years, immunization and family planning.

In other areas they are also critically used to provide ARV's, TB treatment and other chronic medications to eligible patients.

Mostly, Mobile clinic services are delivered to:

- isolated communities, where the population is smaller and does not warrant a clinic at that moment

- vulnerable group of persons such as farm workers and their families residing in isolated places where health care services are not easily accessible
- Communities that have relocated to be closer to work opportunities and urban amenities.

Programme Director, we have observed that the design of the previous mobile clinics had several innate faults; our staff members were carried at the back of the vehicle; tall persons could not stand up right in the capsule; privacy for patients was also inadequate and packing space very limited.

As a Department we have thus taken a decision to improve the conditions under which our personnel work particularly with the vehicles that serve both as a transport and an operational base.

The new 17 MERCEDES BENZ mobile vans converted by Capillano Industries PTY LTD and completed by Vuza Group are much larger and have double back axles for stability and 4X2 traction for slippery and dirt roads.

The new design enables:

- All staff to sit facing forward limiting car sickness and allows team chats.

- All personnel now have access to secure seating with belts.
- The inside provides two compartments where private examinations are done and sufficient space for patients and nurses to stand upright in the compartments.
- Examination compartments are also fairly well ventilated using a combination of extractor fans and windows.
- There is also a sink for hand washing; water bottles and waste medical bins per examination compartment
- Two angle poise lights enable eye and oral examinations with ease.
- A small work table to write up notes will aid the nurses to keep more accurate records.
- Each vehicle also has a modern 12 volt refrigerator for storing vaccines.
- An easy reach out crank awning fitted on the side of the vehicle provides a shade area for waiting clients and can be used for preliminary observations of patients, and,
- A micro wave oven is provided to enable staff members to have a hot cup of tea while in the field... this is a bonus as there is presently now facility where by they can access hot refreshment at most of their stopping points.

The new design in these vehicles also enhances the respect afforded to clients through providing more secure privacy essential in establishing trust and professional relations with clients.

These new mobiles will also provide much needed comfort to our personnel who have to grapple with a number of challenges including:

- Travelling for at least an hour to get to the stopping point where in most cases there are no water or ablution facilities.
- Weather conditions which vary as in other areas such as Underberg it can be extremely cold and in areas of the North, extremely hot, windy and dirty.
- Farmers and land owners where these Mobile Clinics are operational are at times uncooperative and ill-treat our personnel due to the fact that the Department does not rent the spot where people are assisted.
- Terrain also poses a challenge with the rural roads as they are bumpy and very slippery when it is raining.

Programme Director, we are grateful and appreciative that against all the challenges mentioned above we still have committed and dedicated Nurses and other staff members who are always ready and prepared to go out and offer services day after day wherever our patients are.

As a Department committed to providing quality health care to all, we are actively planning to increase visit to be weekly in certain areas

where attendances are high, this as means to ensure access and availability of services.

We are also developing village posts which will be supported by community care givers. These village posts will also be the axis for the Family Health Teams (PHC Outreach Teams) to interact with communities, families, Non Profit Organizations in local areas and Community Care Givers.

Lastly, we need to mention that although our Province makes extensive use of the mobile clinics, we remain committed to the provision of fixed clinics where populations warrant this development.

As we end we would like to plead with our communities to heed the call made by our President, Hon Jacob Zuma in His 2012 State of the Nation Address when he said:

'We also wish to encourage South Africans to live healthier lives to reduce the impact of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension.'

Let us all strive to live healthier and longer.