

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the Community Caregivers Awards function at Moses Mabhida Stadium

27 August 2013

Programme Director –DDG Khuzwayo

US Consul General – Mr Taylor Ruggles

USAID Representative Dr Roxana Rogers

Social Department Acting HOD

KZN Public Service Academy General Manager – Mr Fazal Safla

Officials from the Premiers Office; Social Development and the Department of Health

Cherished Community Caregivers

Ladies Gentlemen

Allow me to express our greatest gratitude to the US Consul General; USAID; PEFPAR and BroadReach Health Care for all the support they continue giving to the Department of Health specifically and the citizens of this beautiful Province in general.

In actual fact I need to pronounce that in every good initiative that the Department of Health has undertaken and received accolades on, USAID; PEFPAR and BroadReach Health Care have had a hand on.

Thank you again.

Our focus today is on the just less than 2000 Community Caregivers from UThungulu and Ugu Districts who received ground breaking training that will drastically change the manner in which we deal with health and social ills that continue to plague our communities at household level.

Again we thank USAID for having availed a total sum of R30 million that made it possible for BroadReach Health Care to offer support and expertise to these young men and women who we depend on to deal with all problems faced by our people at the coalface of disease; poverty and illiteracy.

Our CCGs from both UThungulu and Ugu Districts are now relevant and better equipped to add value to the OSS which is a programme of government that, according to Dr Zweli Mkhize, our Premier; " it aims to integrate the services of Government in order to ensure that it enriches the lives of our citizens." This is the flagship poverty eradication programme that seeks to build a better life for communities and directly focus on individuals and households at community level.

These Community Caregivers in front of us have now been given a 10-day Integrated Community Caregivers Foundation Course which aimed solely at building their capacity in their roles as Community Champions. Today they understand better that they are the connectors between the community and government in the rollout of the OSS.

Programme Director, I need to point out that Operation Sukuma Sakhe is the pride of KwaZulu Natal, we are very elated that it that has received praise and accolades from eminent people in the ilk of the Deputy President, Honourable Kgalema Motlante who made it clear that he would like to see it rolled out nationally. Considering this on its own, I wish our CCGs can fathom how significant they are to be the cogs of this wheel as they are the first cadre in the War Room.

Thanks to BroadReach Health Care, our CCGs have now been provided with a 10 day Integrated Community Caregiver Foundation Course approved by Premier Zweli Mkhize, a course which aims solely at building their capacity as Community Champions, as it entailed:

- Basic education on health and wellness
- Appropriate and relevant tools which will assist in the transfer of knowledge and to enable them to screen and refer to appropriate services, as well as,
- Skills development

We also profusely thank the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Public Service Training Academy for working together with the Departments of Health and Social Development on the development and roll-out of this Course. We now expect fireworks from all the newly trained CCG cadres. Their work is clearly cut as in Health we expect them to impact positively on Millennium Developmental Goals 4 and 5 that pertain to Child Mortality as well as Maternal Mortality. Our vision in this regard is encompassed in the **Phila Mntwana** project that seeks to:

- To provide comprehensive prevention and health promotion package for children at community level.
- To provide the community leadership and war room members with a simple diagnosis of the status of the children in the community, so that corrective measures may be taken when necessary.
- To monitor the Nutritional and Health Status of all Children less than 5 years at community level on a monthly basis.
- To ensure early identification of children with malnutrition, diarrhea, TB and other health conditions as early as possible and to refer for health care.
- To identify children who require referral for government
- To improve access to preventative health services: **G**rowth Monitoring; **O**ral rehydration, **B**reastfeeding and **I**mmunization.

We now also expect great improvement in the management of HIV, AIDS, STI, TB and PMTCT as we trust that these CCGs will ensure that every pregnant woman attends the Antenatal care. Our objective here is to ***reduce the risk of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV to less than 1.4% by 2016***, building on progress made when we reduced transmission from 22% in 2005 to 2.8% in 2011.

We now have trust that we will witness a decrease in default cases as our CCGs will ensure Adherence support for long term and chronic medication including DOTS support and adherence to ARVs.

We also look forward to HIV Counselling and testing uptake as our CCGs will work very hard to dispel myths around HIV and encourage more people to come forward for testing.

Let us go out and change the mind-set of our people and inculcate the culture of using comprehensive contraceptive services which provide an opportunity for women to make and effect decisions on their reproductive choices.

Wherever you are please also ensure that all males in Wards you are serving heed the call by our Majesty the King to be circumcised as means to curtail the spread of HIV.

We are really proud of you trusting that Ugu and UThungulu Districts will serve as beacons to other Districts and the whole of South Africa in terms of how ***Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS)*** is best implemented. After the training received we expect significant improvement on how we deal with:

- household intervention on poverty and in attempts to address the needs of the most vulnerable and deprived communities and households
- Behavioral Change as means to address HIV and AIDS, Crime, Substance Abuse, road accidents, abuse
- Making rural development a realizable vision
- Creating opportunities for skills development and employment.
- Ensuring cooperative governance for better and faster service delivery

Our CCGs must pride themselves that they serve in a unique structure which is the envy of other Provinces as KwaZulu Natal is the only Province that connects with almost all households through Operation Sukuma Sakhe.

Indeed, as a Department of Health in particular, we will heavily rely on CCGs for the assessment of all family health cards to identify existing illnesses that need support

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We also look forward to HIV Counselling and testing uptake as our CCGs will work very hard to dispel myths around HIV and encourage more people to come forward for testing. We all have to ensure that 80% of men and women age 15-49 in our respective districts know their HIV status and receive TB screening.

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opportunity for women to make and effect decisions on their reproductive choices.

We all absolutely have no doubt that from now onwards our clients at household level will receive better profiling that will make it easy and possible for them to access service delivery.

Programme Director, OSS relies on the work of Community Caregivers (CCGs), and as trusted partners, trained and based at UThungulu and Ugu Districts, we today say; we look forward to improved quality lives for our citizens in those Districts. To all of you, we say go out there and:

- Screen and refer family member to access social grants and ID documents
- Monitor school attendance and assist with homework where necessary
- Refer clients to existing Child Care Forums, income generation projects
- Create linkages between households and government departments
- Prepare and submit reports using prescribed reporting tools
- Encourage one home one garden enhancement and support
- Provide early identification of Orphans and Vulnerable Children for referral
- Screen and refer family members to access social services DSD Service offices - Foster Care, Places of Safety, Substance Abuse, Child Abuse, Family Counseling, Care for the aged, victim empowerment, etc.

Let us all work together to rid this Province of its notoriety as a corner with the highest burden of disease associated with underdevelopment and poverty in the country.

As we again thank all our partners in this development; we say to our CCGs: Go out there and help people to get to the services that they need and educate household members to live in a healthy way and prevent diseases. Be instrumental in the realisation of the ***Strategy for HIV and AIDS, STIs and TB for The Province of KwaZulu-Natal 2012-2016*** which aims at: A KwaZulu-Natal that is free of new HIV, STI and TB infections where all infected and affected enjoy a high quality of life.

I thank you