

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the launch of the new Mobile Clinics and Forensic Medical Services vehicles

16 July 2013

Forensic Medical Services GM – Dr Mazizi

EThekweni Health District Management

Forensic Medical Services committed workers

Ladies and gentlemen

We deemed it necessary to launch these much improved and needed forensic vehicles in July, it being a **men's month**.

The connection here is that as a Department, our forensic division does not deal with natural deaths and as such almost all the cases we get involved in are as a result of violent crimes within communities including motor vehicle accidents.

Yes, we will continue budgeting for and purchasing the vehicles and building more mortuaries but we also appeal to the media to be our partners as we embark on a campaign and program aimed at prevention of injuries and unnatural deaths.

It is neither joy nor glory to anyone of us that our beautiful country, South Africa, has been given an unenviable crown of being one of the most if not the number one violent country in the world.

The irony to all this is that these injuries and trauma are the leading cost drivers in our health care expenditure.

We thus have had to develop and adopt at National level a strategy on National Health Sector Strategic Plan for Injury and Violence Prevention under the vision of **“A safe and peaceful South Africa that is conducive to physical, mental and social well-being.”**

We thus appeal for partnership within the media fraternity in promoting peaceful co-existence amongst the citizens. An exasperated Mama Gracia Machel, not long time ago, at the launch of CARMMA, said South Africans behave as if they are at war with themselves.

I earlier indicated that I am pleased that this event takes place during the men’s month because this National Health Sector Strategic Plan for Injury and Violence Prevention has its main focus on:

- Male interpersonal violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Child abuse or maltreatment
- Traffic injuries
- Suicide
- Unintentional injuries arising from fires, scalds, drowning, poisoning and falls

We are saying the onus remains with men to:

- Facilitate equitable gender relationships and norms
- Reduce alcohol and drug abuse

- Facilitate comprehensive measures to reduce suicide-related injuries and associated severity

It will be remembered that the Department of Health took over the running of Mortuary Services from the South African Police Service and over the years we have been hard at work to ensure that we give dignity to the departed. Our focus has been on:

- Improvement of infrastructure, including fleet
- Improvement in quality of service given to community
- Training of staff and professionalization of service thereby creating clear career path for Forensic Pathology Officers, as well as,
- Improved Human resource management

A lot has been achieved in terms of infrastructure development through KZN Mortuary Improvement Plan. We have already built seven [7] new mortuaries and made major renovation to four [4]. These will be handed over to the communities this year. We have also have five [5] more mortuaries that have been identified for construction. We hope this will provide comfort, dignity and respect to those that the Lord has recalled.

What about those whose deaths could be prevented?

For a start, our Forensic Medical Services has procured a vehicle that will be used for the promotion of the objectives of the National Health Sector Strategic Plan for Injury and Violence Prevention. This vehicle is fitted with powerful public address system; has own generator; has a

machine for vision testing and examination couches as well as interviewing tables. It has also been fitted with a facility for drop down screen for presentation outside. This investment is intended for:

- PIER – Promotion, Information, Education and public relations on issue of prevention of drowning, burns, suicide etc.
- Taxi rank campaigns where we will be educating taxi drivers about relevant health conditions that can result to accidents e.g. uncontrolled diabetes mellitus and High BP, Poor vision, epilepsy, drinking and driving etc. We will conduct on site health test for blood sugar, BP, visual acuity etc.
- Conducting community campaigns on violence against women and children especially during the period of 16 days of Activism against violence to women.
- Partnerships with Department of Community Safety in conducting road blocks where we will assist with health campaigns and doing relevant test on willing drivers and passengers.

To further improve our forensic services, we have also procured **14 vehicles**, this as means to replace our ageing fleet as with many of our vehicles easily get to the life span of about 120 000 km.

As earlier indicated, we have procured new modern Mobile Clinics different from the ones we have been previously using and the fleet of mobiles consist of:

- **5 x Iveco Dual Mobile Units.** These units were made to cater for the number of people at each mobile point. The unit has been

divided into two equal parts where two doctors can examine two patients at the same time.

- **4x Citroen Single mobile units.** These units will cater for those points with smaller numbers of people but will serve the same purpose.
- **13 VW Amarok Single Units with 4x2.** These units are to be used mainly for the rural areas.

In our acquisition, we have ensured that these units are able to:

- Provide a complete primary health care consultation,
- Have water and electrical power source,
- Be environmentally and customer friendly,
- Be able to manoeuvrable at all the KZN terrains,
- Be fuel efficient and
- Receive additional innovations that promote quality care of life.

We commit to providing quality services to the communities we serve in the realization of our vision of: Fighting disease, Fighting poverty, Giving Hope.

Let us all say No to Violence and work together to safeguard our communities and only mourn for natural deaths.

Phansi nezimpi zemibango; zemizila yamaTaxi kanye nodlame
lwasemakhaya!

I thank you