

Speech by the KZN Health Hon MEC, Brig Gen, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the DENOSA CONGRESS at the Royal Hotel in Durban

1 AUGUST 2014

Denosa Provincial Secretary – Mr Cassim Lekgwadi

Committed and hardworking Nurses of our Province

Invited guests,

Today we congratulate DENOSA for having been in existence for 18 years now.

We highly appreciate and congratulate of you because we have seen organisations emerging and within no time collapsing. I believe that you have not collapsed because you have a vision and you have been consistent with it.

First and foremost you said you were going to unify the nurses of this country and I know that the majority of nurses of this Province now do belong to DENOSA. The testimony to this is the theme for your congress – **Advancing unity for nurses.**

You again said you were going to be an organisation that will balance professionalism and trade unionism because nurses are both professionals and workers. I know that you have and continue succeeding in this because I have supported your scientific conferences wherein you discuss matters of nursing and health and not only concentrate on labour matters.

In celebrating 20 years of Democracy, we were able to boldly say KwaZulu Natal Department of Health has a good story to tell. This because of the hard work put by our NURSES as we ponder that just five years ago, this Province was the pariah of the whole country with the highest prevalence in all the states the quadruple burden of diseases, which are:

- HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB);
- High maternal and child mortality,
- Alarming and ever-increasing incidence of Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs) as well as,
- The pandemic of violence and trauma.

Everybody agrees when we say KZN has turned the corner!

Tangible progress has been made to the extent that even in our townships; farms and neighbourhoods we all notice and can testify that ***the number of AIDS-related deaths has declined.***

As we meet here today, we need to look beyond HIV and AIDS and reemphasise that Non Communicable Diseases are also a part of the quadruple burden of disease faced in the country and KZN is no exception.

Nurses have a role to play in their prevention and treatment.

Nurses need to inculcate healthy living to their patients as much as we in the Department have formed partnerships with the Civil society; Business and community based formations to beat the epidemic. I am glad that in this Congress that you have invited a guest to speak and

engage with you on NCDs, which says to me I can count on you in the mammoth task of changing mind-sets as means to deal with the NCDs.

Again, as we are assembled, we need to look at pitfalls that inhibit our quest to provide quality healthcare to our citizens. Safety in our institutions is still a challenge, you are aware that I have closed the 24 hour service at Zakheni clinic because our staff members were not safe. I did so to prove that most of the challenges we face can be addressed quickly if we work together.

I am also aware that you have a Positive Practice Environment (PPE) campaign, and the safety is part of this campaign. We do have a common interest in this, I invite you to come and we sit down and talk about this campaign.

I am told that your Chairperson urged you to go back to basics and he made that call because of the kind of cases that are handled at the SANC level that show that you have forgotten what you were taught at the nursing colleges' i.e. basic nursing care. I do support that call because the strength of nursing is that you are with the patients 24 hours round the clock and therefore your care will determine whether the healthcare system of this country are just, patient-centred and aligned to Batho Pele principles.

I am very impressed with you as partners especially in that you are always prepared to interrogate and discuss issues that are bound to take the nursing profession forward

I wish you a successful congress.