

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the official opening of the Verdriet Clinic at Amajuba District

4 July 2016

Ndabezitha - Inkosi

Local Municipality Mayor – Cllr

Izinduna nama Councillors

Senior officials from all Govt Departments

Madadeni Hospital CEO – Dr Duze

Clinic manager and the staff

Clinic committee chairperson

Malunga omphakathi ahloniphekile

Ndabezitha, it is with great pride that we come here today to officially present to you and the community you lead this Verdriet Clinic that was built at the total cost of **R16 000 000 [R16 million]**.

It was indeed a worrying factor that all Governments that were in charge of our country and the Province prior to 1994 did not think of the Health needs of this community. **BABENGENANDABA NOMA NIYAPHILA – NIYAGULA NOMA NIYAFIFA!!**

It was the same with the history of this place which is well documented.

We know that in the 1960's this place and neighbouring areas experienced an influx of people who were expelled by the Boers from farms around Newcastle. We also appreciate that those affected communities were given refugee status and accommodated here through the generosity of the Verdriet Land owners association and that under Induna uBaba Kenneth Adolf Sithole this site was given for the clinic.

Indeed the caring Government of the people also came in, made health needs assessment and built the Verdriet clinic that started operating on the 29th of April 2008. It does provide a service from 07h00 to 16h00 from Monday to Friday and benefits communities that reside in the following areas:

- HILLTOP
- GOEDE GELOOF
- VERDRIET KLIPROTS
- WARD 2, as well as,
- HARTINGSPRUIT

I am glad that the management of this facility say they are striving to make it to be an Ideal Clinic. Indeed this is attainable as long as they work together with all stakeholders and commit to do the following:

- Be a client-centred clinic; open in time and not close until the last patient has been assisted, even if this is beyond the normal closing hours;
- Be very clean, promote hygiene and take all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of diseases;

- Work with the community it serves; provide community-based health promotion and disease prevention programmes in collaboration with the community;
- Have reasonable waiting times and ensure that community members do not have to sacrifice their entire working day to seek health care;
- Apply all the relevant resources at its disposal to provide a quality Primary Health Care service;
- Ensure the provision of quality Health services to the community through good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medicine and supplies, adequate bulk supplies, good administrative processes, optimally use its referral network for the benefit of its clients.

If we carry through all the above mentioned undertakings, our people will thus have confidence in our institutions, and be able to proudly declare that: "This is our clinic."

I say so because in as much as healthcare facilities are built by government, they actually belong to the people. It is therefore crucial that the people take ownership of these facilities by looking after them and those who work there.

Malunga omphakathi ahloniphekile allow me to inform you that less than two weeks ago the Deputy President of the country, Hon Cyril Ramaphosa accompanied by our Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi and other dignities visited this Province. The purpose was the launch of the Campaign aimed at saving the lives of adolescent girls and young women aged between 15 and 24 years.

UNAIDS estimates that there are **1 975 new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 years each week**. In addition, **there are 70 000 babies born to adolescent girls and young women aged 18 years and younger each year** – many of them unplanned.

Our own studies show that the above-mentioned problem comes as a result of young girls sleeping with SUGAR DADDIES and being abused by those who call themselves BLESSERS.

As a community we are called upon to work together to:

- Decrease new HIV infections in girls and young women.
- Decrease teenage pregnancies, in particular to decrease the number of deliveries among girls aged less than 18 years of age.
- Keep girls in school until matric, and increase the retention of adolescent girls and young women in school.
- Decrease sexual and gender based violence amongst adolescent girls and young women.

This Verdriet Clinic thus has to be instrumental in assisting the young people with their needs by providing **Adolescent and Youth Friendly comprehensive package of services**

In this sphere, the health workers have to ask themselves if the following questions are affirmatively answered for the services offered to the youth:

- Are young people welcomed at health care facilities by a friendly face?
- Are services available at hours that are convenient to a young person (e.g. outside of school hours)?
- Can a young person be confident that the sensitive issues they discuss will be kept confidential and that their privacy will not be violated?
- Can they access a wide range of services without parental permission?
- Do they have the option to see the same provider in subsequent visits so that he/she will be familiar with their personal history?
- Do we have information, educational sessions and communication materials to promote healthy behaviours for young people.

If young people are able to answer “Yes” to all these questions, then we will know we are on the right track.

Let us all work together to ensure a long and healthy life for all. Please make use of the services offered here and protect the staff deployed here to serve you.

God bless