

Remarks by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of UKZN Discipline of Nurses 60th Anniversary

10 August 2016

Programme Director

Our mandate as KZN Department of Health is to deliver a sustainable and comprehensive health care system based on the Primary Health Care approach through the District Health System

We have been frank about our situation that KwaZulu-Natal has the highest burden of diseases including HIV, AIDS and TB which we have to deal with if we have to positively impact towards the attainment of our national vision of a Long and Healthy Life for all South Africans.

Nurse training in particular, is crucial in ensuring that we meet the identified key targets set to be achieved by the health sector which are:

- Increasing Life Expectancy
- Decreasing Maternal and Child Mortality
- Combating HIV, AIDS and reducing the burden of disease from TB
- Strengthening Health System Effectiveness
- The reduction of non-communicable diseases.

As a Department we do train our own nurses through the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing but these will never be enough and they will also not be covering all categories as required to deal with the disease profile being faced.

We thus continuously require assistance in the provision of professionals and experts from partners like UKZN.

We are also grateful that through the Department's **Bursary Scheme** which is funding training of different categories of health professionals, the University of KwaZulu Natal is there as a partner, always willing to assist in the production thereof.

It has even gone an extra mile in supporting the rollout of the **NHI** in our Province by entering into a partnership with us that has seen **50 Primary Health Care (PHC) nurses completing their training in 2015 and a further 170 PHC nurses who completed their training in June** this year.

Working together, a lot has already been achieved. The output of nurses has drastically changed the situation that prevailed in this Province. Today we are able to proud declare that KZN has made significant strides in combating HIV and AIDS largely through the involvement and participation of nurses. We can boldly say, if it were not for nurses, we would not have been able to:

- Reduce Mother to Child Transmission of HIV from 22% in 2008 to 1.2 in this year;
- Increase the Number of facilities to access ART to close to 700
- Have close to 1, 3 million patients on ART Treatment as we speak
- Have more 72% of these patients on ART managed at PHC level which is basically an increased access for uninsured population.

Our health system being nurse led, they remain leaders and key mentoring and developing the Community Care Givers who are able to reach people at house hold level.

The nurses you are also responsible in producing remain and are regarded as leaders in the society who we all rely upon for reduction of maternal mortality; infant and child mortality.

We are also certain that most of the trained NIMART nurses would utilize the services of UKZN to enrol for their senior degrees as after making presentations on their success stories, they now have been inspired to do doctorates.

This University has already trained our own Senior Managers [nurses] in and pray that it continues doing so.

We now wish through its research capability it can also influence and assist existing Nurses Associations like the Neonatal Nurses as well as Midwife Associations to better improve their all important disciplines.

Lastly, we are very thankful that UKZN is working seamlessly with the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing in changing landscape of nurse training in our country. This partnership will greatly assist on matters that pertain to **accreditation and compliance with new Regulations and new nursing qualifications as determined by the Higher Education Act.**

Working together we are sure to meet the implementation date of the new Qualifications which phases out legacy programmes such as Enrolled Nurse and Enrolled Nursing Assistant which is January 2017.

Keep up the good work