

Motivational speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the Amajuba District Service Excellence Awards

2 September 2016

Programme Director

Three days ago I spent more than an hour having motivational discussion with the PHC Managers; Operational Managers as well as the Outreach Teams here at the District Office.

In that meeting I clearly explained that the Department of Health has embarked on the process of identifying those individuals amongst its employees who have a potential to provide leadership for its various programmes and disciplines. For this we are not looking outside but onto what we have within our personnel.

In that meeting, I also implored those present to start understanding HEALTH as a foundation for Social Being. This being based on the fact that when people meet, they ask each other: 'How are you'; and this alone relates to HEALTH.

I also made reference to what questions people from other countries may ask you when they learn that you are a Health worker, for instance inquiring about how South Africa is faring on more or less three things, which would be:

- Maternal outcomes
- Infant mortality, as well as
- Under 5 mortality

The answers given will tell what type of country South Africa is.

For instance, in this District, according to your profile, the Maternal Mortality declined as at the end of the 2013/14 financial year. Deaths here are said to be attributed to Hypertensive disorders; bleeding; HIV and other infectious diseases.

The very same profile informs us that the Child mortality remains a challenge in this District. The majority of the children's deaths here are attributed to Septicaemia; Severe Acute Malnutrition; Diarrheal diseases; Acute respiratory and HIV infection.

We are also informed that the Neonatal mortalities experienced here are mainly from extreme pre-maturity; infections; brain damage and lung damage.

I then would say, thank you very much for your contribution in decisively dealing with HIV especially our NIMART nurses and the Community Care Givers. KwaZulu Natal maybe known for its high HIV prevalence but on its own it prides itself for achieving the lowest Mother to Child Transmission which today stands at 1,2%.

Maternal and Child mortality is what all of us must now start concentrating upon. A leader no less than the Deputy President of our country, Hon Cyril Ramaphosa on June 24, 2016 said the terrain of struggle should now be with the 15 to 24 girls and young women.

To succeed in saving the 15 to 24 category, we have without fail change of our own mind-set as health workers. We have to be very open and friendly to those needing contraceptives as family planning goes a long way in curbing the unwarranted deaths being experienced. They can

play a crucial role in reducing adolescent pregnancies where we are more likely to experience preterm or low birth-weight babies and we also know that babies born to adolescents are known to have higher rates of neonatal mortality. Family planning also:

- Prevents closely spaced and ill-timed pregnancies and births, which contribute to some of the world's highest infant mortality rates.
- Reduces the risk of unintended pregnancies among women living with HIV, resulting in fewer infected babies and orphans.
- With provision of male and female condoms it is also instrumental in providing dual protection against unintended pregnancies and against STIs including HIV.

Teenagers are also known to hide their pregnancies and this increases the deaths that we are all striving to curb.

Again, allow me to make a reference to the meeting that we held here three days ago. As health workers I would also like us to strongly try and understand the role we can play in the provision of PALLIATIVE CARE.

The question is; why are we helping to deliver a baby when we are not going to be there to assist when that baby turns 75 years??

Our mandate in dealing with people as health care workers must span from childhood to encompass breastfeeding; immunisation; adolescent stages; chronic diseases and all the health difficulties experienced in these stages.

I trust that District has a potential to succeed in really improving our people's lives. Your achievements speak for themselves especially with:

- ❖ 10 IDEAL CLINICS
- ❖ RENAL UNIT MADADENI HOSPITAL
- ❖ BREASTMILK BANK AT NEWCASTLE HOSPITAL
- ❖ TWO (2) NURSES PRESENTED POSTERS AT THE AIDS 2016 NATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE
- ❖ CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION: FOR ACHIEVING 4TH POSITION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 (TUBERCULOSIS)
- ❖ CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT – SILVER AWARD FOR MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4 (REDUCTION OF CHILD MORTALITY)
- ❖ CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT – FOR ACHIEVING 2ND POSITION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 (COMBATING HIV & AIDS)
- ❖ CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT – FOR ACHIEVING – SILVER AWARD FOR MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 (COMBATING HIV & AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES)

Keep up the good work

I thank you