

**Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the official opening of the Somkhela Clinic at UMkhanyakude District**

12 July 2016

Ndabezitha – Inkosi MM Mkhwanazi

District Municipal Mayor –

Izinduna nama Councillors

Senior officials from all Govt Departments

Hlabisa Hospital CEO –

Clinic manager and the staff

Clinic committee chairperson

Malunga omphakathi ahloniphekile

Ndabezitha, we profusely thank RBM for choosing health as their sphere of corporate social responsibility for this community.

We highly appreciate the fact that RBM started getting involved with this community as early as 1996 when uTata wethu, Nelson Mandela was still a President.

Today, it being the month our beloved President was born, we are elated that we are here again to officially open a new **maternity section**; this time donated by **Tendele Coal Mining**.

On behalf of this community, we all say; thank you for this **R3 904 690** [R3, 9 million] generous gesture that consist of:

- Emergency Room
- Delivery Room with 2 beds
- Post Natal Room with 2 beds
- Ablution facilities
- Sluice Room, as well as,
- Nurses' Room

I may as well announce that the possibility of providing an afterhour's emergency on call services is being explored and we will soon be making an announcement on the issue.

With this official opening today, we again reaffirm President Mandela's conviction to this country's bright future when he said:

*'Let freedom reign*

*The sun shall never set on so glorious achievement'*

Ndabezitha, it is worth remembering that President Nelson Mandela cared so much for pregnant women and young children to an extent that amongst the first policies he promulgated was to decree that pregnant women and their children should receive free medical services.

Now with the maternal services being made available for this community, we are hopeful that never again would a woman in this area

die because she is pregnant. Moreover we have ensured that one **Advanced Midwife** is allocated to this clinic

With these services being introduced, we are also hopeful that in this area we will start observing a decrease in maternal deaths in the under-20 age group as this facility will emphasize the importance of family planning for young women.

I am still horrified that when we visited Hlabisa 3 years ago to launch the Anti **Sugar Daddy Billboards at Hlabisa**, we chose to do so because the previous year we had dealt with 1575 births that were delivered by girls under the age of 18.

Indeed, these are mostly unplanned and unwarranted pregnancies. They actually put the lives of both the young mother and her unborn baby at risk.

Other aspects that this clinic is ready to deal with, provided pregnant women use it, pertain to what the Saving Mothers Reports normally identify as the five major causes of maternal deaths, which are:

- Non-pregnancy related infections mainly due to AIDS
- Obstetric haemorrhage
- Complications of hypertension
- Pregnancy related infections
- Complications of pre-existing medical conditions such as cardiac and diabetes

This clinic is thus ready and fully equipped to deal with all the **Labour and delivery management measures**, which entail:

- Family Planning
- Ante natal care
- Early detection and treatment of HIV**
- TB management in pregnant women**
- PMTCT
- Hypertensive disease case management**
- Cervical cancer screening
- Post-natal care
- Promotion of breastfeeding
- Clean birth practices**
- KMC - Kangaroo mother care

All our good intentions are bound to succeed as this clinic is supported by Doctors who visit twice a month; Speech and Physiotherapists; PHC supervisor; Dentist and Social Worker who all visit once a month

I also hope this clinic is ready and geared to provide **Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services (AYFS)**. To succeed in our initiatives, we have to provide safe and secure environment that is conducive to young people to make sound health choices. This calls for implementing the **"Happy Hour"** initiative that entail providing services on hours that are convenient for young people to access healthcare services.

It also calls for our staff members to be more receptive to the needs of our youth as failure to do so, drive these young people to illegal abortion dens.

**Always remember that stopping HIV infection in adolescent girls is key to stopping the HIV epidemic.**

Lastly, I hope the management of this facility are **striving to make it an Ideal Clinic** as this is attainable as long as they commit to:

- 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; amongst others

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

As we again say thank you to Tendele Coal Mine, 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.

I thank you