



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

UMKHANYAKUDE
HEALTH DISTRICT OFFICE

SIKHANYAKUDE

NEWS

STAY INFORMED

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We salute 37 years of your endurance & dedication to the service humanity - Enjoy your well deserved retirement MRS D.R. MAOELA.



Mrs D.R. Maoela (LaMathenjwa) is exiting while serving as District Clinical Specialist: Primary Health Care at Umkhanyakude Health District. She started her training in General Nursing in 1985 and completed in 1988.

She then started practising as a professional nurse at Bethesda Hospital from 1989 until 2005 where she worked as a community nurse serving clinics and community through outreach programmes.

She was at the helm of a relentless fight against HIV/AIDS that riddled South Africa with uMkhanyakude no exception when even the life-saving antiretroviral treatment had not been rolled-out.



Ruth is taking it to the limit

By PHUMELELE KAUNDA

Ruth Moela, a qualified nurse, is taking community nursing to its limit. Ruth visits rural areas in Jozini, KwaZulu-Natal, to offer local communities home-based care.

She has been HIV/Aids Co-ordinator with the Bethesda Aids Action team since 1999 and has travelled hundreds of kilometres daily to educate and train home-based caregivers in a special 10-day course designed for women with only a primary school level of education.

Together with teamworkers and other community partnerships, Ruth has developed a network of 150 home-based caregivers founded by women volunteers, but extends to traditional healers, traditional leaders and ministers of religion.

"I was touched when I saw people suffering from HIV/Aids and wanted to help them," says Ruth.

"We were understaffed at the hospital and I thought the only way to help was to go out into the community and get individuals to join in and together help sufferers," she adds.

A firm believer in the importance of making HIV/Aids patients feel part of the community, Ruth facilitates awareness programmes that mainly focus on bed-bathing, feeding, prevention and treatment of mouth and bed sores, factual information about Aids and caring for those with the disease.

There are support groups for sufferers and a vegetable garden has been established to help them with food and also to exercise.

Visiting the sick, Ruth's action team discovered that there were many teenagers heading families after the death of their parents.

"We give them emotional support and seek funding to help them with clothes and food," says Ruth.

"We also take them to skills development projects so they can acquire skills that would help them help themselves."

Ruth insists that she can be more effective in rural areas, rather than being a "bedside nurse".

"My projects make a huge difference in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal by caring for 90 clients, offering counselling at nine voluntary and testing sites and caring for over 1 130 orphans," she says.

"As much as it is nice to work indoors, I am not going to change this job for another because I sleep well knowing that people get help," she adds.

Ruth recently became a finalist in the Shoprite-/Checkers SABC2 Woman of the Year awards in the health category.

"The nomination was a boost for me, in that now I know that my work is appreciated. My next move is to go out there and introduce as many programmes as possible, as the need arises," she says.



Ruth Moela walks long distances every day to help those with HIV/Aids in her community.



Her work was recognised by the Principals



Top: Mrs DR Maola with MEC for Health in KwaZulu Natal Nomagugu Simelane & Umkhanyakude District Municipality Speaker Cllr Solomon Mkhombo

Mrs DR Maola with Dr Zweli Mkhize as then MEC for Health in KwaZulu Natal (Right) & as Minister of Health in South Africa. (Top) with Mseleni Hospital's 'Dr Londa Gumede'



A community nurse of note



We bid farewell to one of uMkhanyakude's precious treasures of knowledge in health, a seasoned clinician with 37 years of service; she is a warm, kind and welcoming but very stern and assertive when it comes to service delivery.

She is one of district favourites due to her friendliness, warm and welcoming character. She would walk office corridors, open all office doors just for a "meet and greet" with colleagues (young & old).

She joined the district office since 2005 until her retirement in June 2023 where she was instrumental in implementation of Ideal Clinic Realization & Maintenance programme and in preparation for National Health Insurance.

Her journey is story of selflessness, sacrifice, hope and exceptional service to humanity. We wish her a blessed, peaceful, enjoyable and restful retirement with her family and community she has always loved so dearly.



