



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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HEALTH MINISTER TO ADDRESS THE 1ST NATIONAL GRADUATION CEREMONY OF 17 CUBAN TRAINED SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL DOCTORS AT NELSON MANDELA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE IN DURBAN, FRIDAY 08 JULY

Health Minister will give a keynote address at the 1st national graduation ceremony of 17 Cuban trained South African medical doctors as part of the government-to-government agreement between South Africa and Cuba, signed in 1995 to address the shortage of health professionals. The gala event will be held at the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine in Durban on Friday, 08 July 2005.

The students who have completed 7th year of medical studies were recruited from previously disadvantaged and rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Gauteng and North West in 1999. After completing their 5th year in Cuba in July 2003, they returned to continue their study at various South African medical schools from Jan to Dec 2004. This included rotation blocks, which lasted up to 7 weeks.

At the end of their 6th final clinical year of medical training, they then sat for the National Final Cuban Theoretical Exams. They are now doing their medical internship at various public hospitals. They are expected to do their community service from January to December next year. As part of their 7-year bursary agreement with the National Department of Health, they will remain in the public service for the next five years, and they will be deployed by their respective provinces to hospitals where their services are needed the most.

There are also 33 students who came back to South Africa in July 2004, and were sent to various South African medical universities to do their 6th final clinical year of medical training. We are expecting another 50 students by the end of this month, also to start their 6th final clinical year of medical training. A total of 403 students are presently in Cuba for medical studies and 20 are doing electro-medical engineering.

The two countries also signed for other areas of cooperation, namely; health research; health policy and programmes; biotechnology; vaccine production; pharmaceutical development; exchange programmes on health research, specialists and medical technology.



The media is invited to attend the graduation ceremony as follows:

Time: 6pm

Date: Friday, 08 July 2005

Venue: Nelson Mandela School of Medicine, Durban

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