



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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DEPARTMENT BIDS FAREWELL TO PROF. GREEN-THOMPSON

The Provincial Department of Health will today bid farewell to its longest serving Head of Department, Superintendent-General Professor Ronald Green-Thompson. Prof., as he is affectionately known by his colleagues and staff within the department, was appointed Head of Department in 1995 at the time when the new government of national unity and democracy was being ushered in. Prof. Green-Thompson is not only the longest serving Head of Department in the province but the country as a whole. As Head of Department, Prof. Green-Thompson has to play a pivotal role in the amalgamation of the old NPA and the old KZN Department of Health into one department which is the Provincial Department of Health. He championed in the transformation of the department over the past ten years as Head of Department.

Born in Newcastle on 24th February 1943, Prof. Green-Thompson qualified with the M.B.Ch.B. at the University of Natal, gaining the distinction of a gold medal in anaesthetics in his final year in 1968. Further qualifications included a Diploma in Midwifery of the College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (SA) in 1973, becoming a Member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (London) in 1975, Fellow of the College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (SA) in 1975 and a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1989. He began his career at King Edward VIII Hospital in 1969 and held various posts including Medical Officer and Registrar in the Departments of Dermatology, Surgery, Paediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology before becoming Senior Lecturer and Principal Specialist in this last mentioned department in 1978.

In 1988 he was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, King Edward VIII Hospital and Medical School, at the then University of Natal, a position he held until his appointment as Superintendent General of the Department of Health for KwaZulu-Natal. He previously held several career-related positions including being a member of the South African Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, is current Chairman of the KwaZulu-Natal Fellows Committee, College of Medicine of South Africa, and an Executive Member of the International



Federation of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists . He has 22 publications to his credit and has delivered 32 academic papers to international and national congresses and conferences.

During his tenure at the helm of the department there were evidently many achievements. Through the school Primary School Nutrition Programme that was started by former President Nelson Mandela, the Provincial Department of Health has fed 1 221 264 indigent school children. Ten years ago, there were 236 clinics in the province and through the Clinic Upgrading and Building Programme a further 122 had been built by 2003. A total of 56 new mobile clinics have been purchased. In 1994, there were 8 Community Health Centres in the province now there are 12. In 1994 some 58 clinics did not have electricity but now 53 of those have been electrified. Hospital revitalisation projects that have been approved which include the redevelopment of King George V Hospital, Ngwelezane and Lower Umfolozi War Memorial Hospitals in Empangeni..

Two new hospitals have been built since 1994 and those are, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital which is a 340 bed Regional hospital and the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital a 840 bed highly specialised hospital. In March a sod-turning ceremony was made for two new hospitals in the Durban area, the Dr Pixley Seme Memorial Hospital in KwaMashu and the Dr John L Dube Memorial Hospital in Inanda. Each hospital will cost R 227-million rands.

The Department has been in the forefront of the fight against HIV/Aids. There are 340 sites for Voluntary Counselling and Testing and 1500 lay consellers. There are currently 4760 Community Health Workers. Nevirapine is available at all clinics in the province to reduce the rate of mother- to-child transmission. In March the province has started rolling out antiretroviral treatment for people with Aids.

In August this year the department made history by being the first health department to officially opened 24-hour one stop toll-free call centre in the country. Over the past decade the department has scooped a number of prestigious awards for the achievements in striving towards service excellence and good governance.

These accolades include:

- *The Africa Health PPP/PFI (Public Private Partnership/Private Funded Initiative). Deal of the year 2002 International Award.
- *1 Gold, 1 Silver and 2 Bronze awards were accorded to Addington, Murchison, Wentworth and R.K Khan hospitals in 2002.
- *Mosvold Hospital received the Premier's Best Practise Award 2002.
- *Murchison Hospital received the Premier's Gold Award for Service excellence in 2003.
- *In 2004 Bethesda Hospital won the National Impumelelo Innovation Award for its work on HIV/Aids.
- *In 2004 Grey's Hospital won the Silver Award in the 2004 Premier's Service Excellence Awards.
- *In 2005 Grey's Hospital won Gold in the Premier's Service Excellence Awards.

The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Malaria Control Programme won an award for the best malaria control programme in the Southern Hemisphere. The Department managed to achieve the lowest ever Case Fatality Rate of 0.2% globally. We received acknowledgement from the World Health Organisation for the Best Containment and Best Case Fatality Control ever recorded for a Cholera outbreak and for globally being the first to have a surveillance system that mapped the outbreak as it unfolded.

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