

Media Release

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS A MORAL OBLIGATION AND THE HISTORIC DUTY IN THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2010: IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO

With less than 90 days before the kick off to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health is in its advanced state of preparedness with regard to the health and medical services required for all major areas of impact.

“For the Department of Health, the thrilling journey to the FIFA World Cup 2010 Games started very early when all staff members had the opportunity to wear their Bafana Bafana jersey on Fridays and to fly the South African Flag. We understand that we have a moral obligation and the historic duty to play a special role for the success of the FIFA World Cup 2010. The great success and the high standards of the health sector performance during the Africa Nations Cup of 1996 (and many other events of such magnitude) was the result of an immense collective effort across many levels and professional disciplines at all levels” says the MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo.

Mass gatherings represent significant challenges for health and increasingly so in the light of emerging global threats to public health such as communicable diseases, environmental disasters and the potential deliberate use of biological and chemical agents or radioactive material, the department is ready.

To date, the department has spent a total of R148 million in upgrading and improving its services and enable the department to cope with demand resulting from the influx of tourists coming to watch the world cup. In particular, this budget has been spent as follows:

- Procurement of 125 ambulances (specifically for the world cup)
- Procurement of equipment for setting up Casualty Clearing Stations at the stadium and the official fan park such as tents, golf charts, screening equipment etc.
- Construction of a new Communication Centre which will be used as a Medical Operation Centre for managing medical resources deployed in all areas of impact as well as receiving beds status in hospitals and conducting communicable diseases surveillance
- Trained staff in the following categories:
 - 21 Emergency Care Technicians
 - 198 Intermediate Life Support
 - 34 Assistant through Durban University of Technology (Scarce skill)
- A further 400 staff have been trained on Major Incident Medical Management and Support as part of disaster preparation
- Procurement of hospitals equipment
- Appointment of Port Health Officers in the ports of entry

AERO MEDICAL SERVICE

The department is currently running aero medical service through SA Red Cross Air Mercy Service with 2 helicopters and 1 fixed wing.

HOSPITALS

Hospitals have been assessed and designated to deal with different categories of patients from critical, serious to minor injuries or general illnesses. The department has engaged the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine's Family Medicine Department to run an Internationally Accredited 5 day's program on Emergency Medicine. The Medical School will also deploy its Registrars and final year students (under supervision) to assist hospitals in distress as part of the medical teams for the World Cup games.

OTHER TRAINING

- A number of staff has completed training on Chemical Biological Radioactive which was offered by the South African National Defence Force to prepare them to deal with contaminated patients.
- Hospital Medical Major Incident Course for South Africa (HMMISA) will also commence in April 2010 as part of preparing hospitals to deal with major incidents and disasters.
- All hospitals have disaster plans and have started conducting disaster drills on a regular basis.

PARTNERSHIPS

The department has strengthened its partnership with key strategic institutions to mobilise additional support in terms of staff and equipment such as:

- South African Military Health Services
- Durban University of Technology
- Nelson Mandela School of Medicine
- Ethekewini Municipality

The equipment bought and skills gained by staff will be of benefit to the people of KwaZulu-Natal, and the country, beyond the Fifa World Cup.

ENDS

ISSUED BY:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL