

TO: ALL MEDIA  
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## **Media Statement: KZN Health has added R26 million worth of resources to save lives over the festive season**

“You are better off with a paramedic in an accident scene than those of us who trained to look after the patient when s/he has been brought to the hospital.” This was said by the MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo at a function to unveiling the emergency medical services to be availed to respond to the demands of the festive season. “I know this because I recently assisted in a bus accident scene where forty people were injured.”

MEC Dhlomo was addressing Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel at the South Coast Ultra City in Umgababa this morning where the Department unveiled 49 new ambulances at the cost of R26 million. The department also announced the addition of 332 basic life support, 55 Intermediate Life Support and 18 Advanced Life Support officers and they will be deployed over the festive season.

“You must know and understand that you are a very important component in the healthcare delivery chain. Your work falls in what is referred to as National Duty. I will therefore take up the challenge from your General Manager in exploring basic military training as part of your curriculum,” said MEC Dhlomo.

The MEC further thanked the South African Police Service and the Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI) for the good working relationship. He challenged the EMS and RTI to kick start a programme where they train taxi drivers in particular in basic first aid skills and providing first aid kits in every vehicle.

He also called on the general public to work towards the prevention of accidents as they take much needed resources, such as health personnel and budgets, away from those in dire need. “To air-lift a patient from an accident sight it costs us around fifty thousand rands (R50 000). We spend ten thousand rands (R10 000) to care for such a person in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). So, in one week we simply spend one hundred thousand on a single person per week which could have been spent elsewhere.

“It is for this reason that we all need to work towards preventing accidents because their costs are too huge – emotionally, breaks social cohesion and takes away breadwinners.”

For too long, trauma has been one of the leading health problems of the world. In addition to all that needs to be done to improve road safety and other aspects of injury prevention, efforts to improve care of the injured are essential.

The event ended with a simulation of a crash scene extraction where the EMS personnel demonstrated their preparedness for the festive season.

For pictures please call Themba Mngomezulu at 072 517 5417.

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