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## **New mobile clinics to enhance the School Health Programme and access for people in informal settlements and rural communities**

Today; the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo unveiled the first batch (17) of the revamped state of the art mobile clinics that offer improved services, sufficient space for examinations and privacy. This is part of a broader programme of the Department to re-engineer the primary healthcare and cost the Department R14, 2 million. A further five more mobile clinics will be delivered at a later date to make the total of 22.



*MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, Ms Gcina Radebe, District Manager for Sisonke and Ms Lyn Julius, Deputy Manager for Health Promotion*

“The World Health Organisation stated that any reform in primary healthcare represents a single great opportunity for the improvement of the lives of people and performance of the healthcare system as a whole,” said Dr Dhlomo during the unveiling function held at Grey’s Hospital in Pietermaritzburg. The Department has spent more than R100 million to improve its fleet including the revamp of mobile clinics. There are currently around 170 mobile clinic vehicles which were, in the main, designed in the ‘80s. These have proven ‘not to be friendly’ to staff as the nursing staff are accommodated where patients are examined. Many of these old vehicles could not travel in some of the rural areas where the terrain is terrible.

“This intervention is part of our plans to prepare for the implementation of the National Health Insurance and towards our goal of a long and health life for our people. Through these clinics we will be able to improve on cancer, TB and screenings in areas where we

are unable to offer a fixed clinic due to population size.”

MEC added the Minister will, on the 21st March, announce the two districts where the NHI will be piloted in this Province and we are very excited about this.

The new vehicles will provide a comprehensive package of primary healthcare services especially for the enhanced school health programme and for the most rural communities. They are fitted with electrical power and water sources, are ergonomically designed and environmentally friendly, have low fuel consumption and can manoeuvre the provincial terrain with ease. They will be able to accommodate two patients at a time for examination.

The clinics are distributed to all the Districts as a first batch with more to come in the new financial year. He told the gathered officials of the Department that; “In KwaZulu-Natal we are making a bold statement that we are making primary healthcare a reality. Primary Healthcare is the mainstay of healthcare delivery and it is befitting that when we decide to replace our fleet, after five years of no expenditure in this area, we invest in improving the primary healthcare.”

The future primary healthcare will focus on community based healthcare delivery using the local government demarcations to ensure equity, efficiency and sustainability of healthcare delivery. “This approach will be supported by District Specialists teams and Primary Healthcare Outreach teams,” explained the MEC as he concluded. “Community care givers and nurses will be the backbone of this approach.”

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