

Media Release:
4 February 2014

‘Quality of health care in rural areas set to drastically change with the arrival and deployment of Cuban specialists,’ so says the KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo.

14 Cuban Doctors who are specialists in different health disciplines have been warmly received by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo. The arrival of these Specialists in KZN is as a result of the Cuba – South Africa agreement intended to assist this country in health care matters and in the production of more Doctors.

In welcoming the Doctors, MEC Dhlomo highlighted the good relationship that the liberated South Africa shares with Cuba indicating that the bond that ties the two countries was cemented in blood and principle in the trenches of Angola during the struggle against apartheid.

In heaping praise to Cuba, Dhlomo said: ‘As patriots, we remember and honour the heroic efforts of the Cuban soldiers in that Angolan war and the spectacular defeat of the apartheid army in Cuito Cuanavale which brought about the speedy implementation of Resolution 435 which then became the cradle for our own emancipation.’

The Doctors were thanked for the revolutionary decision they took to come and ply their services in the rural areas where South African born specialists refuse to go. Dhlomo also explained that the 8 South African Medical Schools produce only 1200 Doctors per annum and that only a fraction of these end up in public healthcare Institutions

As means to alleviate the shortage of Doctors, South Africa signed an agreement with Cuba to allow our students to study Medicine in that country. Dhlomo said until such time that the plus thousand medical students sent to Cuba last year come back as qualified doctors; the situation is still going to remain dire for rural communities.

Dhlomo also indicated that the big advantage that comes with the placement and deployment of these Cuban Specialists will be in the curtailment of the movement and transportation of patients from the rural areas to tertiary hospitals in the cities just to receive medical attention. Attention in terms of health care will now be derived in District hospitals closer to where the people live.

Some of the disciplines offered by these Specialists are scarce even in the urban based hospitals and Dhlomo hailed their introduction to rural based hospitals as a remarkable feature in terms of expanding access to quality healthcare.

The Cuban specialists are placed in institutions in the following manner:

NAME & SURNAME	SPECIALTY	DISTRICT	INSTITUTION
Dr Horacio Izquierdo Ramirez	Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery	Amajuba	<u>Madadeni Hospital</u>
Dr Ana Ceillia Valdez Borrotto	Maxillofacial Surgery	Amajuba	<u>Madadeni Hospital</u>
Dr Alexander Hernandez Alfonso	Ear, Nose and Throat	Amajuba	<u>Madadeni Hospital</u>
Dr Osmany Diaz Guerra	Family Medicine	uMgungundlovu	<u>Appelsbosch Hospital</u>
Dr Mairovis Ochoa Reyes	Dermatology	uMgungundlovu	<u>Grey's Hospital</u>
Dr Jorge Luis Batista Columbie	Maxillofacial Surgery	uMgungundlovu	<u>Edendale Hospital</u>

Dr Yoannes Solano Fonseca	Family Medicine	Umzinyathi	<u>Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital</u>
Dr Mildres Gonzales Medina	Family Medicine	Umzinyathi	<u>Church of Scotland Hospital</u>
Dr Rodolfo Martinez Chaver	Urology	Uthungulu	<u>Ngwelezane Hospital</u>
Dr Neison Ramos Suarez	Ear, Nose and Throat	Uthungulu	<u>Ngwelezane Hospital</u>
Dr Pedro Manuel Perez Armas	Family Medicine	Zululand	<u>Nkonjeni Hospital</u>
Dr Mercedes Figueras Guerra	Family Medicine	Zululand	<u>Nkonjeni Hospital</u>
Dr Julio Cesar Godoy Ferraz	Family Medicine	Zululand	<u>Ceza Hospital</u>
Dr Jesus Antonio Gonzalez Villalonga	General Surgery	Zululand	<u>Benedictine Hospital</u>

The people of KwaZulu Natal who are beneficiaries of this revolutionary arrangement are implored to welcome these Doctors with open arms and be showed the spirit of UBUNTU as they are here to serve the marginalised communities.

Dhlomo then encouraged the doctors to venture out in their leisure time to enjoy the beauty of this Province by exploring its game reserves; beaches; heritage sites and good food.

The doctors are already on the ground in their respective allocated institutions.

