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## **MEC Dhlomo addressed the Health Portfolio Committee at the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature: 06 February 2014**

Today, the MEC for Health in KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo addressed the Health Portfolio Committee at the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature and gave a progress report on the developments in his Department. During this meeting, MEC Dhlomo was joined by the Head of the Department, Dr Sibongile Zungu and the senior management of the Department.

A report was provided to the Health Portfolio Committee by the Department, on various matters and some of the key issues reported on are as follows:

### **1. Update on McCord Hospital**

On the 25th of September 2013, a decision was taken by the Board of McCord Hospital, the MEC for Health and MEC for Finance; that the Department of Health will take over McCord Hospital by the 1st of February 2014.

On the 1st of February 2014, the Department of Health held a handover ceremony whereby McCord Hospital was taken over as one of the Department of Health hospitals. Key to the take-over process was the absorption of McCord staff to the Department and ensuring that no staff lost a job.

### **2. Update on St Mary's Hospital**

St Mary's Hospital is a beneficiary of grant funding from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, which represents over 85% of their revenue stream. The hospital has received a 3% increase over the last few years whilst the Department has had a cut of 1% cut in the MTEF budget.

In November 2013, the Department was informed that St Mary's Hospital was unable to meet its financial obligations and was projecting an over expenditure. A task team was established by KZN Department of Health to look and assist with various issues concerning the hospital. All reports and recommendations were presented to the Trustees in December 2013.

The Department approached Provincial Treasury and presented the findings of the task team. The Provincial Treasury agreed that they would consider a once off funding whilst the Department investigates the possibility of a take-over. The Board however was not supportive of the take-over. The Department approached Provincial Treasury once again and they agreed to support the funding of R10,788,270 in April 2014 and R20,119,434 in the next financial year.

Subsequently, the St Mary's Catholic Mission Hospital Foundation made an application to the High Court to have the St Mary's Hospital Trust placed under sequestration. The attorneys of the Foundation have requested a meeting with the Department on the 10th of February 2014.

### **3. Update on St Aidan's Hospital**

The procedure for the acquisition of St Aidan's Hospital is with the Public Works and the evaluation was received by the Department. An offer was made to the Diocese through Public Works as Custodian of the State and the Department awaits a response on this offer. The Department extended the lease agreement pending the outcome of the purchase and sale agreement.

### **4. Cuban Medical Training Programme**

A total of 289 students have departed for Cuba since the 7th of October 2014, with the last 13 students scheduled to leave on the 14th of February 2014.

The KZN Department of Health has welcomed 13 Cuban Doctors to the Province. The doctors

underwent a two day induction and orientation programme and they have been placed at various institutions according to the disciplines and clinical needs; mainly in the peripheral areas.

During the proceedings of the committee meeting, the KZN Department of Health received commendations from members of the Health Portfolio Committee on the remarkable progress it is making in the delivery of public healthcare infrastructure to the communities. Responding to the commendations, MEC Dhlomo said “a decision to employ an Engineer to lead Infrastructure Development Unit was one of the best decisions the Department has ever made. Over the years, the Department has seen remarkable progress in the delivery of public healthcare infrastructure throughout the Province. In an effort to enhance access to public healthcare services; especially in our rural communities; the Department has opened a number of new public healthcare facilities and on an ongoing basis will open many others to ensure that quality public healthcare services are taken to all corners of KwaZulu-Natal for the benefit of our communities”.

ENDS.

ISSUED BY: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, KWAZULU-NATAL