

MEDIA RELEASE
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KZN Health MEC salutes nurses on International Nurses Day

As the world celebrates International Nurses' Day today, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, has paid tribute to all practicing and retired nurses for their contribution in improving health outcomes in the province.

Held under the theme, Nurses: A Force for Change: Care Effective, Cost Effective, International Nurses' Day is celebrated worldwide on the 12th of May each year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, who led the movement of nursing to be recognised as a profession.

Nursing has evolved over many years from the Florence Nightingale era to innovative nursing where the role of the nurse has expanded to meet health outcomes such primary health care re-engineering, Integrated Management of Childhood and Adult Illnesses and are the key players in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and the priorities of National Health Insurance and National Core standards.

Nurses also play a significant role in leadership as health facility CEOs, researchers, nursing specialists and academics.

Dr Dhlomo believes nurses are a crucial stakeholder to the realization of the "Stepping Up the Efforts/ S'khuphula Umfutho" HIV Epidemic Response for KwaZulu-Natal Strategy, which was unveiled by the Premier, Honourable Senzo Mchunu, at the Provincial Council on AIDS earlier this year.

The success of this Response relies on the efforts of nurses who, among others, ensure that:

- All citizens access services for HIV counselling and testing;
- All clients eligible for ARV treatment are enrolled on the programme including those with a CD4 count under 500 as well as all pregnant HIV positive mothers and children under-5 years; and
- All patients on any treatment regime adhere to treatment requirements.

Dr Dhlomo said, "Nurses are a vital resource for health. They are perceived to be the brain, heart beat and back bone of the health care system. They are the only resource available 24 hours for the patients' needs. And they are well placed to understand the complex nature of health and wellness. Nurses must never abandon their focus and responsibility to be patients' advocates in health care service delivery. So, today, as the world honours them for their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm, we want them to know that they are treasured and appreciated not just for one day, today, but every day."

Dr Dhlomo also encouraged nurses to pursue opportunities to develop themselves further by studying. "Never cease to explore and expand your horizons as a nurse. You can enter various nursing disciplines, such as Paediatric, Psychiatry, Midwifery; Orthopaedics; Ophthalmology, or become a nursing tutor. The sky is limit."



KZN MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo shares a light moment with a nurse



With patients at Haley Stott Clinic in Botha's Hill i

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