

12 August 2015

## **KZN Health MEC's campaign to promote palliative care gathers ground**

Efforts to integrate palliative care into the public health care system will be further strengthened through a Palliative Care conference which will be co-hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health and the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa (HPCA) in Durban next month.

The conference will be held from 27 September – 30 September 2015.

A meeting was held in Durban yesterday between the KZN MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo and Dr Liz Gwyther, CEO of the HPCA to discuss some of the finer details of the conference.

MEC Dhlomo is passionate about Palliative Care, having qualifications and experience in the discipline himself. He is an ardent campaigner for this health discipline to be integrated into mainstream healthcare, as it advocates for the provision of good care to people with advanced illness and to ensure the management of pain and other distressing symptoms.

MEC Dhlomo will be speaking as the opening plenary speaker at the conference under the theme: "Hidden Lives, Hidden Patients: Compassion for All." This is the theme of World Hospice Palliative Care Day which has been identified by the Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA).

South Africa will be expected to report on progress towards integration of palliative care into the health system to the WHO executive board in January 2016.

Dr Dhlomo said: "Palliative Care entails provision of comfort, peace and dignity to both the patient as well as family members as it emphasizes living, encourages hope and helps people to make the most of each day. It is something we all need to promote and support."



*KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo is pictured here with (from left) the Head of the KZN Health Ministry, Mr Bheki Nzimande, Dr Liz Gwyther CEO of the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa (HPCA), Ms Sindi Mthwethwa - deputy director: Non-Communicable Diseases and Mrs Zodwa Sithole, HPCA advocacy manager.*

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