

MEDIA RELEASE:  
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## **"Miracle" quadruplets turn one month today, are in a stable condition at Benedictine hospital**

The "miracle" quadruplets from Nongoma and their mother are all in a stable condition and have now been transferred back to Benedictine Hospital in Nongoma, where the babies were born exactly a month ago today.

According to the attending doctor, Dr Nokuthula Mathe, the babies are growing stronger, and their mother is stable.

Two of the girls and the boy now weigh 1,3kg each, while the other girl weighs 1,4kg. The babies have been named Olwethu (boy), Owam, Owethu and Oliswa.

Soon after their birth, on 13 September 2015, the babies were transferred to a neonatal ICU ward at Lower Umfolozi War Memorial Regional (LUWMR) Hospital - a specialised facility that is dedicated to the care of obstetrics and neonatal patients – for further care. They returned to Benedictine Hospital last Wednesday.

The smooth and incident-free birth of the four bouncing babies at Benedictine Hospital in Nongoma on 13 September 2015 was described as a miracle as their mother, Nobuhle Qwabe, admitted at the time that she had not attended antenatal classes during her pregnancy. She said she had only found out that she was carrying quadruplets when they were born. She gave birth naturally.

The birth of the babies caused a sensation and spectator value at Benedictine Hospital and in the community of Nongoma at large, with patients flocking to the maternity ward, wishing to catch a glimpse of the quadruplets and take photographs. The doctor had to intervene and ask that they be given space and privacy.

Congratulatory messages for the doctors and nursing staff who successfully delivered the babies have also been received from as far afield as Pretoria.

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC, Honourable Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, congratulated the team of doctors and nurses from Zululand health district who successfully performed the delivery. Speaking from the hospital ward shortly after giving birth, Ms Qwabe admitted she had not been attending antenatal classes during the run-up to her delivery.

"I honestly didn't know I was carrying four babies. I was surprised when the nurses told me I was carrying more than one child. I was really not expecting it. But when the doctors arrived, and the babies kept coming, I didn't know what to say. I was shocked, but I'm excited now," she said.

Cuba-trained Dr Sibusiso Sithole, who is based at Nkonjeni Hospital some 50km away, said he was called to Benedictine Hospital by the nurses around 19h00 last night, after they realized that Ms Qwabe was carrying more than one baby. He went with Dr Kenneth Mbele, a University of KwaZulu-Natal medical graduate.

Dr Sithole said: "When Dr Mbhele and I arrived in the ward, we examined the mother and discovered that indeed there might have been one more baby in her. We then helped her deliver the second baby. We were quite surprised to learn that there was a third baby still coming. We then helped her deliver once more. Now, according to our training, triplets are far more common than quadruplets, so it would have been easy to assume that the third baby was the last, and that she had had triplets. But when we checked, we discovered a fourth baby. We were truly, truly surprised."

According to Dr Sithole, the babies weighed between 1kg and 1,3kg. The boy had his own placenta, while the three girls shared theirs.

"We were able to remove both placentas with no problem. All the babies were healthy and there was

no bleeding from the mother,” he said.

Dr Sithole, who studied medicine at Santa Clara University through the Government’s Mandela/Castro Medical Doctor Training Programme, and has been a doctor for eight years, said: “I’ve delivered many sets of twins before, but I’ve never done triplets - let alone quadruplets. This has been a real miracle.”

Dr Sithole thanked everyone who was involved. “This was not a one man show. I would also like to thank my colleague Dr Mbhele, and the nurses who were involved, and the mother for the co-operation that she showed during the delivery. She gave us no problems.”

Ms Qwabe is unemployed and lives with her grandmother and two sisters. She also has a nine year-old daughter.

Asked how she would care for the babies, she said: “I don’t know how I’m going to care for the babies, because I only have two hands. I will also need help with baby formula and clothing.” Commenting on this, KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, said: “I would like to congratulate and thank these young doctors who support us in such rural and remote hospitals. A surprise of quadruplets in a district hospital and so well-managed is a miracle. We wish both the mother and babies good life.”

The MEC, however, issued an appeal to all pregnant mothers in the province to start ante natal care quite early for optimal care of both mothers and newborns.

“It is a miracle that the mother was able to deliver the quadruplets without incident,” Dr Dhlomo said.



*Nobuhle Qwabe with her quadruplets at Benedictine Hospital today. The babies turned one month today.*

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