

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## New nursing graduates a major boost for eye-care service provision at the new McCord Provincial Eye Hospital

KWAZULU-NATAL Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, has hailed the 20 nurses who graduated in Ophthalmic Nursing Science today, as being poised to enhance service delivery at the newly-opened McCord Provincial Eye Hospital.

The graduates are among 1872 nurses who are graduating from 25 campuses and sub-campuses of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing, which is hosting a three-day nurses' graduation ceremony from today (14 October 2015) until Friday.

The event is taking place at the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds, in Pietermaritzburg, amid a jubilant atmosphere, with proud parents and relatives decked out in the finest clothes, cheering their children on and congratulating them on their big day. Entertainment is being provided by choirs made up of nurses .

Speaking at the event today, Dr Dhlomo said: "I'm particularly excited about the Ophthalmic nurses that we are getting. Last week, the Department officially opened the McCord Provincial Eye Hospital. We now need these ophthalmic nurses. They will be deployed in various parts of the province and will be able to diagnose and refer people on time, even in the far-flung areas.

Graduates also came from other categories, such as, Advance Midwifery, Orthopaedic Nursing Science, Operating Theatre Technique, Critical care Nursing, Child Care Nursing Science, Ophthalmic Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing and Basic Midwifery.

"The health status of our people and the burden of disease will be greatly enhanced as we deploy all these specialized nurses. Indeed, they will be able to serve under Primary Health Care and promote and advocate for both curative, and preventive health care."

Dr Dhlomo urged all of them to always remember that theirs is a calling – not just an ordinary job.

Quoting from a speech by his Excellency, President Jacob Zuma during the launch of Operation Phakisa 2: Ideal Clinic Realisation, Dr Dhlomo described the Ideal Clinic programme as "a milestone in our country's efforts to improve the quality of life of its people, by enhancing their health."

He said nurses were central to the realization of this ideal.

"This is what the President said: 'The Operation Phakisa intervention seeks to transform all our public sector clinics into Ideal Clinics, which provide good quality care to all our communities.

"The Ideal Clinic Realisation and Maintenance Programme is rooted in the ethos of Primary Health Care. It is not only about further enhancing access to good quality care in our clinics, but is also about fostering closer relations between our clinics and the communities they serve.

"It also aims to foster relations between government and non-governmental actors and formations active in those communities.

"The question we are to ponder today is the following: If we were to ask the people of South Africa, ordinary citizens, to define an Ideal Clinic, what would they say?"

Dr Dhlomo said he was convinced that the masses of South Africa would define an Ideal Clinic as a health facility that possesses the following characteristics:

- Opening on time in the morning, according to its set operating hours, and which does not close until the last patient has been assisted, even if this is beyond the normal closing hours;

- Staffed by health care providers who treat people with dignity, and observe the Batho Pele principles of Access, Consultation, Courtesy, Information, Service Standards, Openness and Transparency, Redress and Value for Money;
- Provides community-based health promotion and disease prevention programmes in collaboration with the community;
- Is very clean, promotes hygiene and takes all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of diseases;
- Has reasonable waiting times and community members do not have to sacrifice their entire working day to seek health care;
- Provides a comprehensive package of good quality health services every day and community members do not have to return on different days for different services;
- Has the basic necessities available, such as essential medicines;
- Refers people to higher levels of care timeously when this is required; and
- Works together with the community it serves, with diverse stakeholders, in promoting health and socio-economic development

“Finally, community members would say an Ideal Clinic is one that we can be proud of, and call it “our own clinic”, rather than a “government clinic” or a “state health facility”.

Turning to the graduates, he said: “You remain the backbone of our hospitals and clinics and the engine of our health care system.

As you go out there, you need to carry this with you, to say, ‘I’m not in just any other job. I’m in a profession that says I must be selfless, this is not about me.’ Our job is not about getting pay at the end of the month, it is a calling.

“For people who are critically ill and hospitalized, you are usually the first person they see on waking up and the last they see before retiring at night.

“You remain the patients’ key source of information, comfort, assurance and delivery of treatment.’ Be the patients’ advocates!

“When nurses and all healthcare professionals are lazy and not come to work on time and do not do their work properly, people die.

“Therefore, I urge you to go out there and do good, our country is proud of your achievements,” he said.

Prof Nokuthula Sibiyi, Head of the Durban University of Technology’s Nursing Department, commended the parents who had chosen to invest in the education of their daughters and sons, among other competing survival priorities. She also congratulated the students, who had embraced the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those who need care.

Referring to a study titled High Quality Care for All Now and the Future, by June Cumming from the National Health System in England, Prof Sibiyi urged the graduates to follow the 6 C’s which are central in the improvement of quality of care – Care, Competence, Compassion, Commitment, Communication and Courage.



*KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo shares a light moment with Dr Sindi Mthembu, the principal of the KZN College of Nursing.*



*KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo addressing the nursing graduates*



*These are some of the nursing graduates*