

MEDIA RELEASE  
15 January 2015

## **KZN Health MEC warns medical students against unrecognised overseas medical universities**

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has issued a strong warning to those who intend pursuing medical studies overseas to first ensure that qualifications from the universities where they intend to study are recognised in South Africa.

According to Dr Dhlomo, a number of South Africans are languishing at home, unable to practise in South Africa after graduating from universities in countries like China, Turkey, Mauritius and others.

“As the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, we would like to warn parents and students themselves to check first and ensure that the universities where they intend studying are recognised here in South Africa,” said Dr Dhlomo.

“We are very strict about that. We have to protect our profession and our South African healthcare users by ensuring that they are handled only by people who have received the approved medical qualifications.”

Dr Dhlomo said when these graduates come back into the country, they failed the examination of the Health Professionals Council of South Africa (HPCSA), which is the body that evaluates graduates and gives license for healthcare practitioners to have access to patients.

“Right now there are problems with certain internships, because you can’t grant internships if the HPCSA hasn’t granted a licence.”

Dr Dhlomo urged parents and students to ascertain with the HPCSA whether the universities they intended studying at is recognised.

“It is sad when parents have sent their children on their own, paying handsome amounts to these universities, only out later that these qualifications aren’t recognised. Therefore, we urge everyone to ensure that the universities where they send their children are fully accredited and recognised.”

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health sent 96 medical students to Cuba in November 2014, bringing to 798 the number of students from the Province who continue to benefit from the Cuban medical doctor training programme. This is part of the South African Government’s strong resolve to alleviate the chronic shortage of doctors in the country.

It is anticipated that by 2019, all these medical students would have returned to the country to begin ploughing back their much-needed skills in their own communities.

ENDS

Issued by the KZN Department of Health