

MEDIA RELEASE
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KZN Health employees awarded for service excellence and being a good example to others

Picture a three-man crew of paramedics from the Emergency Medical Services frantically trying to extricate a newborn baby girl from a 3m pit latrine toilet in rural eSidakeni area, in Msinga.

One of them goes in head first, while his colleagues hold his feet. The heroes, Mr Simphiwe Majola, Mr Vumelakhe Sokhela and Mr Mandlenkosi Nsele manage to pull the baby out, clean her up, stabilise her and send her to hospital. And she lives to one day tell the tale.

In another instance, employees rush into a burning building at RK Khan Hospital in Chatsworth, in a desperate bid to rescue their colleague from a burning building. In an act of sheer guile and bravery, they manage to kick down the door, and rush him into an emergency ward. Sadly, he loses his life a little while later.

These are just some of the remarkable stories that emerged from the KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC's Annual Service Excellence Awards, which took place in Durban last night (03 June 2016).

Now in its third year, MASEA was established to reward individuals and teams who have excelled in various disciplines, having contributed to health service delivery in the most adverse conditions and under the most trying circumstances.



Also among those who garnered accolades was Umzinyathi district, for being chosen as the best-performing National Health Insurance in the whole country.

This glitzy event took place amid a joyful atmosphere, with foot-stomping performances by top gospel artists, who kept the audience, from the length and breadth of the province, enthralled.

Among those who took home top honours were five employees with a minimum of 45 years' unbroken service. They are Mr M Ngcobo (Fort Napier), Ms P Govender (Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital), Mr S Thusi (King Dinuzulu Hospital), Ms R Nair (King Edward VIII Hospital) and Ms LM Abrahams (Wentworth Hospital).

Winners in the Special Award Category were:

- First Lady, Ms Tobeka Madiba-Zuma (in absentia) in recognition of her role in leading health care programmes and championing the cause for women's health in the province; nationally and internationally;
- Dr S'thembile Ngidi, who was also awarded for making history as KwaZulu-Natal's first Black female oncologist, and only the second in the country;
- Bethesda Hospital for the resolve shown between 3-5 November 2015, when it continued rendering healthcare services to patients in the midst of a potentially crippling protest that had broken out in Mkhanyakude District;
- Former drug addict-turned-activist, Mr Khayelihle Gumbi, who took home a Special Award for initiating Ukukhanya Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Inanda, north of Durban, which focuses on taking young people off the streets. The shelter looks after 30 previously destitute young people.

- Dr Imtiaz Suleman, of the Gift of the Givers Foundation, who also walked away with a Special Award for excellence and overall contribution to humanitarian aid, trauma relief and medical support globally.
- The University of KwaZulu-Natal's College of Health Sciences for its overall contribution to education in the field of health sciences, specifically for its focus on rural health;
- The South African National Blood Service for its dedication and contribution to health care in the province through the provision of blood and blood products.
- Dr P Naicker and a medical team from Newcastle Hospital for the excellence and dedication displayed when successfully delivering a baby from an unusual and challenging abdominal pregnancy.
- A medical team from Benedictine Hospital, led by Dr S R Sithole from Nkonjeni Hospital, for the "miracle" successful delivery of quadruplets. The mother of the babies had not been attending Antenatal classes and did not know she was expecting more than one baby.

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC, Dr Dhlomo, congratulated all the winners on the winning, and said he hoped their exploits and selfless contribution would spur their colleagues on to work just as hard.



MEC Dhlomo with TB ambassador prince Nhlanganiso Zulu and HOD Dr Sifiso Mtshali;



Emergency Medical Services paramedics from UMzinyathi District, Mphathiswa Malembe, Vumelakhe Sokhela and Simphiwe Majola (two of whom were involved in the pit latrine toilet rescue).

ENDS
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