

MEDIA RELEASE:  
05 July 2016

## **KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, gives hope to young medical student who suffered a stroke and dropped out of his studies**

Top academic achiever Siyabonga Nxumalo had the world at his feet after passing his matric with flying colours in 2010, managing to secure himself a bursary from the KZN Department of Health to study medicine.

But the 23 year-old University of KwaZulu-Natal student from Madadeni was dealt with a severe blow when he suffered a stroke in February 2015. And life has not been the same since then, as he was forced to abandon his studies and seek medical treatment.

The stroke rendered him unable to speak or perform simple tasks such as bathing and clothing himself. His ongoing journey to recovery has included a three month stay at King Edward VIII Hospital, as well as numerous trips to other hospitals.

MEC Dhlomo, who is the political champion for Amajuba District, was alerted to Nxumalo's plight by Madadeni specialist Dr Sibusiso Ntsele. Today, MEC Dhlomo visited Nxumalo at his home at Madadeni. He was accompanied by officials from Amajuba District, as well as the CEOs of Madadeni and Newcastle Provincial Hospitals.

The household is headed by Nxumalo's mother, Thoko Thwala, who is a domestic worker. His father passed away.

Although Nxumalo has regained his speech - albeit slightly slurred - as well as marginal use of his right hand, he walks tentatively.

However, MEC Dhlomo has expressed hope that Nxumalo might be able to make a significant recovery, with continued medical attention.

"Siyabonga chose a career in medicine because he wants to help his community. He is just left with two years of studying, having come a long way. He needs all the support he can get, and we will support him as much as possible, in order to ensure that he realises his dream of uplifting himself and his family.

"The good thing is that he is still young, and young people are usually able to recover from a stroke. But part of this battle will be won in his mind. Most people who are sick heal better and faster if they, themselves, believe that they can heal. The reason some patient do not recover is that they give up the fight too easily," said MEC Dhlomo.

MEC Dhlomo appealed to the health officials present to give the family as much support as possible, including physiotherapy, which would help strengthen Siya's muscles. The officials made a commitment to assist the future doctor.

Nxumalo's family expressed their gratitude to the MEC for his intervention.

Stroke, also known as a brain attack, occurs when blood flow in a region of the brain is obstructed by a blockage within a blood vessel or by a ruptured blood vessel.



*KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, during his visit to the family of medical student Siyabonga Nxumalo (third from left), while his mother Thoko Thwala and brother Mzwandile Nxumalo look on.*

ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Ministry of Health