

10 December 2016

## **Eshowe Hospital hailed in its Diamond Jubilee (60 year celebration)**

Ceremony held on the 9th of December, 2016 [Friday]

KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has personally thanked the pioneers who at the height of Apartheid defied the norm and started to attend to African pregnant women and their children when it was not permissible at that hospital.

Initially pregnant women residing at Eshowe; Nkandla; Mthunzini; Mthonjaneni; Babanango and Mahlabathini would be referred to Mbongolwane and Ngwelezane hospitals for the delivery of their babies.

Explaining why he decided against the norm, the retired Obstetric and Gynecologist, Dr Jonathan Larsen who worked in the hospital for 21 years said:

‘Many pregnant women from the surrounding rural areas would be denied service here and be told to go to Mbongolwane Hospital. Many lost their babies and some of the women died of complications with no one to assist on the long trek and as Doctors, we decided to act.’

Dr Larsen has now been honoured by having the Obstetrics and Gynecology ward named after him.

The same was given to the retired Dr Jennifer Chapman who served as a specialist pediatrician at the hospital. She worked hand in hand with maternity department, concentrating in the neonatal unit as a recipient of the outcome of complicated births. During her tenure she motivated for the purchase of much needed equipment like bassinets; incubators; head boxes; walled oxygen/suction; heaters and resuscitation equipment. As a result, premature babies of 750 grams no longer died as they were nursed to a good discharge weight of 2.5 kg.

Special honour was then reserved and bestowed to the Hospital’s retired leader Sr Ellen Mkhize who served the hospital for 41 years. She came in as a Nurse, worked her way up to be a Senior Professional Nurse; Clinical Teaching Sister; Nursing Manager and eventually became the first female and Black Chief Executive Officer of the historic institution.

A special plaque was also unveiled in honour of Staff Members who lost their lives whilst on still on service at the hospital.

In congratulating the hospital for its 60 years of existence, MEC Dhlomo said the reason why he does not frequently make unannounced visit to the institution is because there are virtually no complaints he receives from community members about care and lack thereof.

He also praised the management for achievement of having the institution selected as the Cleanest Hospital in the Country Award in 2011. He made a special appeal to junior nurses to keep alive the caring ethos and exemplary work laid by people like Sister Mkhize who served the patients diligently for 41 years.

Eshowe Hospital remains the biggest District hospital in KwaZulu-Natal with its 400 approved usable beds for the population of close to 138 000 people residing in 26 Wards under Umlalazi Municipality.



*Inkosi Biyela; MEC; retired CEO Sr Mkhize and current CEO, Dr Sangweni*



*MEC and Dr Larsen*



*MEC; Dr Chapman and current CEO Dr Sangweni*

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