

MEDIA RELEASE:

## Major boost for specialised healthcare in KZN as nurses with scarce skills graduate

12 October 2016

THE provision of healthcare in KwaZulu-Natal has received a major boost, following the start today of a three-day graduation ceremony that will see 1501 new nurses conferred with nursing qualifications.

Among them are 280 specialist nurses who are trained in specific health disciplines such as Advanced Midwifery, Orthopaedic Nursing Science, Operating Theatre Technique, Critical Care Nursing, Child Care Nursing Science, Ophthalmic Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing and Basic Midwifery.

They are made up of:

- 19 graduates for Ophthalmic Nursing, adding to 14 who graduated in 2014 and six more in 2015. They will now be instrumental in improving eye care services in the Province;

- 59 Advanced Midwifery and Neonatal Care; adding to the 61 who graduated in 2014.

- 41 for Orthopaedics Nursing Science, adding to the 48 who

graduated last year; as well as the 41 who were produced in 2014. They will now be dispatched to all Health Districts, so as to curtail the transportation of patients to tertiary hospitals.

A further 62 nurses graduated in Critical Care; with 45 in Operating Theatre; and in 54 in Child Health.

Also among the graduates were nurses from 11 other nursing categories; including the Professional nursing course; Diploma programme; Professional nurses from the 2 year Bridging course; Enrolled nurses; Nursing Auxiliary; Basic Midwives; Psychiatric nurses and Primary Health Care nurses. The latter are poised to help the Department's efforts to pilot the National Health Insurance plan.

Speaking at the graduation, held at the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds in Pietermaritzburg, MEC Dhlomo called on all graduates to accept and treat the noble nursing profession as life-long training experience.

“Continue treating patients with compassion as pronounced in the Nurses Pledge, where it says ‘the total health of my patients will be my best consideration.’”



MEC Dhlomo also paid tribute to the top three learners who achieved the highest marks amongst all learners graduating from within the 10 campuses of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing. They have passed each year of their Diploma, 4 year programme in General; Community; Psychiatric and Midwifery with distinction and are awarded the DIPLOMA CUM LAUDE (Over 75% and above in each year of the programme).

They are Nontobeko Portia Ncube from the Ngwelezane Campus; Nompumelelo Goodness Phakathi from R.K.KHAN Campus, and Zwakele Phinokuhle Ngubane from the Benedictine Campus.

MEC Dhlomo said KwaZulu-Natal Province has to do more and perform better than any other Province as it carries a status of being the epicentre for HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB); high maternal and child mortality, alarming and ever-increasing incidence of Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs) as well as the pandemic of violence and trauma.



“These are what the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi refers to as ‘four highways along which South Africans are marching to their graves.’ It thus rests on your shoulders as nurses to ensure that this country meets the identified key targets set to be achieved by the health sector.”

These targets are:

- Increasing Life Expectancy;
- Decreasing Maternal and Child Mortality;
- Combating HIV, AIDS and reducing the burden of disease from TB
- Strengthening Health System Effectiveness; and
- The reduction of non-communicable diseases.

“As qualified nurses you are from now on expected to positively impact on the vision of attaining a Long and Healthy Life for all South Africans.”

He said this is possible as KwaZulu-Natal already has tangible proof of nurses’ immense contribution in this regard, through the Nurse-Initiated Management of Anti-Retroviral Treatment (NIMART) programme.

He said that without nurses, the Department would not have been able to:

- Reduce Mother to Child Transmission of HIV from 22% in 2008 to the current level of 1.2%;

- Increase the Number of facilities to access ART to close to 700;
- Have close to 1, 3 million patients on ART Treatment;
- Have more 72% of these patients on ART managed at Primary Health Care level.

<<<Captions>>> Principal of the KZN Nursing College Dr Sindi Mthembu and KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo with the top performing nursing students Nontobeko Portia Ncube, Nompumelelo Goodness Phakathi, and Zwakele Phinokuhle Ngubane.



ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health