

14 October 2016

Conjoined twins: KZN Health MEC expresses full confidence that the babies will receive the highest level of Healthcare possible

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has expressed his full confidence that the conjoined newly born twins from Zululand will receive the highest level of healthcare possible at Inkosi Albert Central Luthuli Central Hospital [IALCH], where they are being treated.

The twin girls, who are conjoined at the chest and abdomen (omphalopagus), were born at their home in Pongola, on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal, on Saturday, 08 October 2016. Their 31 year-old mother has conceded that she only attended ante-natal classes once, during the early stages of her pregnancy.

MEC Dhlomo visited the twin girls in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of IALCH today, and interacted with their mother, as well as the chief paediatrician, Dr Harshavadan Ratilal “HR” Mackanje.

MEC Dhlomo said: “Whatever outcome these twins are going to have will be God’s will. Here, at IALCH, they are going to be exposed to a multidisciplinary team of highly trained specialists, including neonatologists, orthopaedic surgeons, cardiologists, gastroenterologists. This hospital is the best place because all of these specialists can be found under one roof.”

MEC Dhlomo said he had been briefed by Dr Mackanje that each twin was comfortable and breathing on their own and currently being fed intravenously. He was also informed that although there are certain vital organs that the babies share, (such as the liver) there are other critical organs, such as the heart and lungs that they do not share, which makes their case a little less complicated.

“The doctors are still working on a plan in terms of what they want to do with the babies. They have indicated that they’ll allow the babies to grow to a certain age (about six months), which, according to their knowledge, will allow for a particular surgical intervention, if needed.”

MEC Dhlomo said he is pleased that whatever decision the doctors take will include the family’s wishes.

“They’re not going to make any decision, good as they may be, without involving the family. The family component, culturally, will be much of the planning going forward.”
MEC Dhlomo said that if the hospital care was to be done privately, it would cost millions. This, he said, is why the National Health Insurance is so crucial.

“The costs that would be involved in the hospital care and other future plans would have amounted to what we call catastrophic health expenditure, which is exactly what NHI will deal with, as our national health minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi has been saying. The family would have barely managed. But now these babies are going to have an outcome that is not dependent on how much money their parents have in the pocket.”

MEC also hailed the Air Wing of the Department’s Emergency Medical Services for being at hand last Saturday, as they are the ones who airlifted the twins from Itshelejuba Hospital to Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital.

MEC Dhlomo has wished the mother and her twins well. He once again strongly appealed to all pregnant mothers in the province to start ante natal care quite as early as possible, in order for any abnormalities to be detected early, and to ensure for optimal care of both mothers and new-borns.



KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo with chief paediatrician, Dr Harshavadan Ratilal “HR” Mackanje, with the conjoined twins

Photo: Themba Mngomezulu/KZN Department of Health

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