

MEDIA STATEMENT:
19 March 2016

KZN Health MEC meets parents of students prematurely returned from Cuba

The MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo together with the Head of Department, Dr Sifiso Mtshali met with parents and students who are now permanently removed from the program. The meeting took place at Truro House in Durban on Saturday, the 19th.

The exclusion affects 19 students from KwaZulu Natal.

South Africa has more than 3000 students studying in Cuba of which more than 800 come from KwaZulu Natal. They are at different levels of study, more than 300 expected to do their final year in 2017.

The 19 students who are now back in the Province have been excluded for various reasons that include:

- Academic performance; i.e., not coping with studies
- Voluntary opting out of the course, as well as,
- Misbehavior

In explaining the purpose of the meeting Dhlomo said:

'We needed find out whether we have the same understanding with parents as to why their children are now back home. We also needed to explain that there were costs involved here intended to produce a Doctor from each student involved and that, that money has to be accounted for.'

Parents of students who could not cope academically were relieved when Dhlomo informed them that the Government is not going to turn its back on them if they decide on another health discipline other than Medicine. 'Students are free to apply and enrol in South African Universities and will be assisted if means are available.

The same cannot apply to those who are back for their demeanors.

All the time before students depart for Cuba, we have ensured that we personally meet them parents giving them orientation on what to expect in Cuba. In these sessions we even involve Doctors who studied and qualified in Cuba who give accounts of how to cope and behave in that country.'

Dhlomo indicated that that the Department is satisfied with the overall performance of those enrolled and has high hopes for the rural parts of our Province who will be serviced by these student Doctors, once they qualify.

