

MEDIA RELEASE:  
23 August 2016

## **KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo urges Cuba-based medical students to behave and be good ambassadors for South Africa**

KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has made an impassioned plea to a group of Cuba-based medical students to grab the golden opportunity to become doctors with both hands and desist from all forms of unbecoming behaviour.

The medical students, who are in various years of studying, have spent the July and August holidays based at health care institutions throughout the Department's 11 health districts. This was to help them familiarise themselves with South Africa's disease profile and observe patient care, especially in relation to caring for patients with HIV, which does not exist in Cuba.

Addressing the students, MEC Dhlomo said: "My plea to you is, go back to Cuba, and continue doing well so that this opportunity is never lost to any other child who must come next. You're just a passenger through a programme you didn't create. Some people have benefitted from this programme. They left a legacy for you to benefit, do no waste this opportunity. Please become good ambassadors for us. This is about country to country relations... Respect the fact that we send you to Cuba out of desperation, wanting more doctors, so please persevere."

MEC Dhlomo urged the students to imbibe the Cuban model of medical training, which he described as one of the best in the world, so that they can come and replicate it back home.

"Cuba has wiped out malaria. The country has significantly low infant and maternal mortality. They adhere to basic things. It is part of their culture to walk and exercise. You live longer as a human being if you exercise... Your success as doctors will be measured by how many people are not sick. Here, we are trained to be hospi-centric. We wait for patients, we treat them, they go home. But your orientation in Cuba wants you to go and do community diagnosis. That is the model of prevention that you must come and replicate here."



*KZN Health MEC Sibongiseni Dhlomo with some of the Cuba-based medical students and their parents*

ENDS

Issued by the Ministry of Health