

MEDIA RELEASE
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KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo calls on nurses to be proactive in saving pregnant mothers' and newborn babies' lives

When healthcare professionals are lazy, take short cuts and fail to observe protocols, people die and they never get a second chance. Therefore, healthcare workers must always do everything humanly possible to save lives. This is the call by KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo.

He was speaking yesterday (23 August 2016), at the opening of the Society of Midwives of South Africa (SOMSA) Congress, which is underway in Durban until Friday.

Hundreds of midwives from all over the country are attending the conference, which is being held under the theme: Midwives: Taking the lead in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the maternal mortality rate is showing a consistent decline since 2010. In 2010, 385 deaths of pregnant women were reported as compared to 239 in 2015.

However, the KZN Department of Health is concerned that in the Province, 1 in 20 children die before their 5th birthday and that 45% of these, die outside the health care services.

MEC Dhlomo called upon all midwives, as well as all other healthcare professionals to actively advocate messages of maternal care at every given opportunity - even during social events such as weddings and church gatherings.

He added that nurses should be alert and be keen to do random assessment of pregnant women and children at any available platform where they can add value. "This proactive approach can go a long way in terms of yielding desired results in managing maternal deaths. "As a country, we are measured by how much we support pregnant women and we are called upon to do everything possible to help those women. You therefore need to do everything humanly possible to save lives," pleaded MEC Dhlomo.

He said out of 1 million babies delivered per year, 900 000 are from public hospitals in the care of midwives. Therefore, midwives need to remain steadfast in rendering healthcare service to pregnant women.

He urged them to go beyond the call of duty to promote the use of Waiting Mothers Lodges for rural provinces like KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, where road surfaces and transport challenges always pose a challenge to pregnant women in terms of them getting to the hospitals on time.

As per its agenda, the SOMSA congress will deal with issues related to maternal and child health, with a focus on, among others, how to improve adherence to ethics; working conditions; patient management; delivery outcomes and everything else that midwives deal with.

“In our time, we can end preventable maternal mortality, it’s our legacy to leave for the next generation,” said SOMSA President Elgonda Bekker.



KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo with SOMSA President Elgonda Bekker.

ENDS

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