

27 September 2016

## **KZN Health MEC impressed with Palliative Health Care given in Westville Prison**

MEC Dhlomo has expressed great appreciation on the manner in which Correctional Services provide healthcare to inmates in the KwaZulu Natal Province.

This after the MEC last week visited Umzinto and Ixopo Correctional facilities. Today, September 27, he visited Westville Prison touring the medical section and meeting with the inmates.

At Westville the MEC got to learn that the facility carries a capacity of 10 to 12 000 inmates at varying times. He was also impressed when he was informed that Medium B section is the only Correctional Centre in the country that is running Palliative Care through its partnership with Hospice Palliative Care of South Africa.

This Palliative Care programme has assisted in improving the quality of life for offenders with a life threatening illness by giving nursing care; pain management; symptom control; psychological, social, emotional care as well as spiritual support. Offenders are also trained to be Care Givers and render basic nursing care under supervision to other fellow inmates.

The Correctional Services Regional Commissioner, Mnikelwa Nxele informed the MEC that Westville Correctional facility today has Wards or Rooms designated for Palliative Care manned by 5 Professional Nurses; 2 Doctors trained on Palliative Care; 2 Psychologists; 2 Spiritual workers; 10 Social Workers as well as 26 Correctional Service personnel trained on Palliative Care.

MEC Dhlomo says he is impressed that the offenders themselves were not left out in this after being informed that the facility has 60 male and 5 female offenders trained in Basic Palliative Care. These carers assist in identifying in the cells those inmates requiring care but reluctant to seek help.

Westville Prison, as a result of these innovations has seen a decline of offender deaths from 43 in the year 2010 to 15 in 2015 as well as 4 inmates moving from a state of being bed-ridden to walking.

MEC Dhlomo then committed to assist saying the Department will reinforce these efforts; 'It is actually the mandate of the Department to work towards the attainment of a long and healthy life for all South Africans. The offenders start at our clinics and once incarcerated, they cannot not just be a burden of Correctional Services only as they eventually come back to the society and can infect if they are not catered for.'

We will give get involved especially with the provision of Antiretroviral in line with the Government directive that as of September 1, 2016, all those testing HIV positive must be put on treatment.'

The facility currently has more than 1700 HIV positive inmates but only about 900 on treatment.



*MEC with bedridden ones inmates*



*MEC with Palliative Care trained inmates*

ENDS