

St Mary's hospital is now fully run by the KZN Department of Health

09 October 2017

On the 29th of September last year (2016), the Department together with trustees of the insolvent St Mary's Catholic Mission Hospital Trust and the Missionary sisters of the Precious Blood, held a joint media briefing to announce the start of negotiations on the planned disposal of the institution.

This was necessitated by the financial difficulties encountered by the previous owners of the hospital in the running of this historic institution that was established in 1927.

The news of a possible shut down of this 200-bed, Level 1 District Hospital that serves a population of approximately 3 million raised a very big concern to us as KZN Government; Department of Health as well as to various stakeholders including its healthcare users.

For over 100 years this Hospital has been providing quality healthcare service for communities residing in Cato Ridge; Inchanga; Mpumalanga; Hammersdale; Shongweni Dam; Kwa Ngcolosi; Waterfall; Molweni; Gillits; Hillcrest; Stockville; Kloof; Mpola; Tshelimnyama; Mariannahill; Pinetown; Ashley; Wyebank; Clermont and New Germany.

St Mary's Hospital also acts as a referral Hospital for 15 provincial and municipal primary healthcare clinics as well as 2 community health centres (CHC's).

Indeed, the closure of this hospital would have spelled disaster as it would have severely compromised access to healthcare services for all the above mentioned people. It would also hamper our efforts to reduce the burden of diseases in this Province. Worse of all, was the spectre of joblessness and loss of skills in the health sector as many of the hospital employees would have suddenly found themselves out of employment.

Today, I am very pleased to come and announce to you that St Mary's Hospital is reassured of its existence and future. The fruitful negotiations we have held have resulted into the following:

- The Department has commenced with the running of St Mary's Hospital, effective from the 1st of October 2017.
- The Department is now implementing a cabinet approval of the 12th of April 2017 with regards to the purchase of the moveable assets, land and buildings in line with the terms and conditions of the approval.
- The Department committed R11, 4 million towards the purchase of moveable assets at a tender auction on the 20th of September 2017. On the following day, the Department was informed that its purchase price offer was accepted and therefore assumed ownership of assets on the very same day.
- The asset team has already put a plan of action together for verification and bar coding of all moveable assets.
- The Department roped in the Department of Public Works in the valuation of the affected land and buildings earmarked for the adoption of the hospital.
- Attorneys acting for the Sisters of the Precious Blood also appointed their own valuers to engage with the Department of Public Works.
- All affected land and buildings of St Mary's hospital were costed at R166 million by both valuers but the Department successfully negotiated a purchase price of R142 million which will be procured via an expropriation process.
- The Department has meanwhile signed a rental lease agreement from the beginning of this month 01 October 2017 until the implementation of the expropriation process which is expected to be within the next three months.

- The Department has also commenced with the recruitment processes for human capital at government equivalent salary levels and 99 % of St Mary's hospital staff stand to benefit from these appointments.
- Our Supply Chain Management team has also met with all existing St Mary's contract service providers (including those who provide catering, cleaning, security, waste management) in order to negotiate a short-term contract with them for the continued provision of services until such time that the Department can commence with an open and transparent supply management process for the procurement of these services.
- Our Pharmaceutical component has already conducted a stock take and verification of what is available as means to ensure that the hospital has the necessary medication on hand and that none of the existing stock has passed its shelf life.

St Mary's Hospital will remain the pride of the people of KwaZulu Natal, giving them amongst others the following package of services: Family Medicine and Primary health care; Rehabilitation; Surgery; Obstetrics; Paediatrics; Psychiatry; Eye care as well as Geriatrics.

Ladies, and gentlemen, I wish to once again reiterate that we are extremely pleased at these developments and that we appreciate this opportunity to deliver quality healthcare to our people.