

KZN Health MEC urges new nursing graduates to go back to basics in providing health care to the public

12 October 2017

KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has commended the province's nurses for playing a huge role in improving the lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the graduation of **1416** nurses in Pietermaritzburg today, MEC Dhlomo said that without the commitment and hard work of nurses, KwaZulu-Natal would have neither managed to enroll more than 1, 3 people on Anti-Retroviral Therapy; nor accelerated the Prevention of Mother-To-Child-Transmission of HIV from 20% in 2008 (which amounted to 80 000 mothers countrywide passing HIV onto their newborn children each year) to the current 1, 2%.

MEC Dhlomo, however, expressed his concerns about a minority of nurses who exhibit a negative attitude towards patients. He urged all nurses in the province, including those graduating today (and tomorrow) to go back to basics, and always uphold the Nurses Pledge when dealing with patients and the public at large.

"We go to communities and speak to people. There are nurses in the community who spoil the name of the profession. Patients tell us that sometimes when they ask for help, nurses say, 'Are you a nurse? Go back to your bed and leave me alone.' Others say that when they tell you that they are in pain, I'm dying, some nurses say, 'Listen, you won't be the first to die. I always say that perhaps those who no longer have the calling must just leave the profession. As nurses, it is not good enough to have good attitude from morning until lunch time and then change, and become something else."



MEC Dhlomo and KZN Nursing College principal Ms Sindizama Mthembu congratulate some of the top achievers, Joyce Oduro and Nonkululeko Sanele Buthelezi.



Some of the graduating nurses

MEC Dhlomo added that he hopes the return of white nurses' uniform would help stir the consciences of nurses, as white colour was universally accepted to be a sign of purity. "Our patients will not understand a nurse who is dressed in white but has a heart of the devil. If we work on the change of attitudes, it is going to assist us greatly."

He further asked midwives to help the health sector to decrease the rate of maternal and child mortality in the country, and bring it down to a single digit number.

“Can we please go back to basics. Make sure that every pregnant woman coming to see you for the first time has her urine investigated. It can help you intervene much earlier. Also, don't ignore high blood pressure. Do not give medication to lower it just for time being instead refer that patient accordingly. That way, you are preventing intra-uterine death.

Please follow our protocols. We always plead with you to go back to basics. Do not deviate from the protocols that have been there. Don't undermine the use of a partogram. As long as there's no better system in the labour ward, please do not deviate from that.”

The graduating nurses are now qualified in various categories, including those where skills are scarce, such as Advanced Midwifery; Orthopaedic Nursing Science; Operating Theatre Technique; Critical Care Nursing; Child Care Nursing Science; Ophthalmic Nursing; Psychiatric Nursing, among others.