

# From volunteers to enrolled nurses, the heartwarming journey of former CCGs who have come of age

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*"We have gone from being Community Care Givers earning little, to being nurses today. Now we are able to raise families, take our children to school, and run households. We are very grateful to the KZN Department of Health for investing in us and giving us an opportunity."*

These are the heartfelt sentiments of newly-qualified nurse Busisiwe Mbambo (54) from Darnall, Illembe District. She is among 179 former Community Care Givers (CCGs) who were selected for an upgrading programme after spending years serving as ONOMPILO.

They are part of a total of 1461 nurses from the College on Thursday and Friday, and are now qualified in various nursing categories.

MEC Dhlomo congratulated this cohort of nurses, saying that he is fully aware of the difficult path that they have had to travel to get to this stage.

*"Whenever I go around the province, I feel humbled and it warms my heart to be called by a nurse to show me a car that they have bought, or to be told about a four-roomed house that they have built for their parents. They say to me, 'I would not have been able to afford that if I was still a lay counsellor.' We are really proud of what the college has managed to achieve. I wish it can do more of these programmes."*

*"I want to thank and congratulate those who are qualifying in this bridging course. Theirs was not an easy path. ...These enrolled nurses who are bridging today are competent in various nursing disciplines. Nobody identified them or gave them recognition. I thank the College for recognising them and giving them space...They have sacrificed for a long time, earning peanuts."*

Other categories that the nurses graduated from include Advanced Midwifery; Orthopaedic Nursing Science; Operating Theatre Technique; Critical Care Nursing; Child Care Nursing Science; Ophthalmic Nursing; Psychiatric Nursing, among others.

MEC Dhlomo turned to the parents of the graduates, and said that they have a role to play in moulding nurses to have integrity, which will make it easier for them to uphold the Nurses Pledge and treat patients well at all times. *The issue of staff attitude is a countrywide challenge in the health sector. When we train nurses, we teach them anatomy; physiology; medical and surgical nursing, amongst others - we don't teach them integrity. We can't. They must get that at home... Real integrity begins at home. And that is the role of parents.*