

MEC Dhlomo applauds the return today of the second group of Cuba-trained medical students

13 July 2018

KZN Health MEC Dhlomo has expressed his excitement at the impending return early this evening of the second group of fifth year medical students from Cuba.

They are part of the 260 who left the country in 2012, and are finally coming back home to complete their studies and then graduate as fully-fledged doctors.

Starting from 01 August 2018, these students will begin their final sixth-year studies and integration into the South African health system, as part of the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro (NMFC) medical collaboration programme of the Department of Health.

Once they graduate, they will then start working in their districts of origin, literally meaning that their mostly poor communities will have access to more doctors than ever before.

The students bring a new approach to healthcare provision that is centred on disease prevention and health education and promotion, in line with the Cuban healthcare model.

KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo will once again welcome the KZN students as they reunite with their families. He says *the return of these students is an important milestone in the country's history, and is opportune as it comes on the eve of the centenary celebrations of liberation of the lives of Struggle luminaries Dr Nelson Mandela and Mama Albertina Sisulu.*

The homecoming of the Cuba-trained students will increase the Province's capacity to deliver healthcare to the public, including in far-flung rural areas where the global shortage of doctors is felt more acutely

"As Government, we are implementing National Health Insurance, which focuses on primary healthcare. These students, coming back as doctors trained in Cuba, are driven by that as a way of life: primary healthcare, health promotion, health education, prevention of diseases, all of which is exciting for us as South Africa," says MEC Dhlomo.