

MEC Dhlomo salutes Community Care Givers: announces their massive salary increase

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"This ANC-led government has brought dignity to the people." That is how KZN Health MEC Dr summed up the recent increase in the stipend that is earned by the province's 10771 Community Care Givers (CCGs), from R1500 to R3500 per month.

Speaking at a ceremony to officially announce the stipend increase in Pietermaritzburg yesterday, MEC Dhlomo paid tribute to the Province's 10771 CCGs, thanking them for profusely for taking primary healthcare services to poor people's homes.

MEC Dhlomo's announcement coincided with the signing into law of the National Minimum Wage Bill, by President Cyril Ramaphosa yesterday.

KwaZulu-Natal's Community Care Givers visit people's homes, and render a host of services which include assessing clients; facilitating treatment for chronic and other ailments; identifying and tracing those who default on medication and referring them accordingly.

They also test girls aged 15 and upwards for pregnancy. This alone has helped to significantly increase the number of women who present for early ante-natal booking at clinics – meaning that any underlying ailments which could adversely affect the pregnancy are picked up early.

MEC Dhlomo said: *"CCGs were getting stipend of R1500. Despite earning that little, they would sometimes get to certain homes and find that a patient has not eaten. From the little that they have, they'd go buy bread or maas for the gogo and give her pills. In some instances, they'd help buy soap to help the elderly wash their clothes. So, these are people who have a calling. The government had talks with the workers and a decision was reached on the minimum wage for everyone, which was R3500."*

"All our CCGs, since June, are now earning R3500. They've received their back pay from June. We're saying this is not the last. It's just a minimum. It's giving dignity to South Africans, to say, you can't earn less than the minimum."

MEC Dhlomo also congratulated those former CCGs who took opportunities to upgrade their careers, and are now nurses and nutrition advisors.

We took a conscious decision to support these children who were earning R1500. We've trained some of them, and we have 865 of those who were CCGs who are now staff nurses in the province. It means they're now earning R9000, which makes a huge difference. Some of these people now have cars, and have managed to build homes and take their children to university. There are also 536 who are Nutrition Advisors, who deal directly with things such as child malnutrition. They're based in clinics and hospitals. All in all, there are 10771 CCGs who have benefitted from this programme in KwaZulu-Natal."

Former CCG Bongi Nzimande, from Ngubeni area in Pietermaritzburg, was among those who thanked the Government for bringing change and dignity into their lives.

I'm from a very poor household, where what we lived in could barely be called a home. It was built from mud. From the stipend that we were earning as CCGs, I was able to save up money and buy clothes to resell. Once I had completed a course at the University of KwaZulu-Natal after receiving a bursary, I started working as a nutrition advisor. I was able to buy a second-hand car for my mother within a short period of time. And with the passing of time, I also bought building materials and built our mother a home, which we are all staying in. Today, I earn a decent

income. I'm thankful to the Government for this opportunity and all the support. I am very thankful," she said.



MEC Dhlomo shares a moment with nutrition advisor Ms Bongzi Nzimande and Ms Eunice Menyuka, a former CCG who is now a nurse at Nondabuka Clinic, UMkhanyakude District



Acting Head of Department Dr Musa Gumede, with MEC Dhlomo, Ms Khwezi Maphalala from Corporate Communications and UMgungundlovu Health District May Zuma-Mkhonza



The CCGs who filled the hall at East Boom Clinic, in PMB