

# 100 jobs and access to community healthcare saved as KZN Dept of Health takes over Siloah Lutheran Hospital in Zululand

25 October 2018

There has been a huge sigh of relief and much ululation at the Siloah Lutheran Hospital in Zululand District as KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo officially announced the takeover of this health facility by government

This announcement, made today, has allayed the fears of 96 staff members and scores of community members who would have been adversely affected by the closure of this hospital which, until recently, seemed like a reality.

Speaking at the hospital, at the Dlomodlomo area under Abaqulusi Municipality, MEC Dhlomo said the closure of the facility – originally built by the Lutheran Church Ministries – would have been catastrophic.

*“This hospital has been state-funded for a long time. When it was brought to our attention that the board of this facility was experiencing difficulties running its affairs and had run out of money, we took a resolution to extend its grant funding while exploring ways in which we could take over its running, and rationalise its services.*



MEC Dhlomo

*with local ward Cllr Ntuli with relieved nurses from Siloah Lutheran Hospital*

*“There was a possibility of closure. After months of negotiations involving various stakeholders, as well as conducting an exercise to ascertain its viability as a healthcare facility, we have finally arrived at a decision.*

*“Today, I made an announcement that, after serious considerations and advice by the Cabinet of KZN, led by our Premier Mr Willie Mchunu, who gets advice from President Cyril Ramaphosa, we’ve decided to keep this hospital open.*

*“From 01 October, workers have been put on pay roll... All of them except just 9 due to glitches which are being resolved, have confirmed that they’ve received their salaries.*

*“The price [for this hospital] and other matters are being negotiated by the Department of Health, supported by Public Works, with the owners of this facility.*

*“We felt it was important not to leave our people destitute, in terms of access to health services. When we want to decentralize and improve access to health of all our citizens as the National Health Insurance (NHI) is saying, it would have been an anomaly to close the facility. Rather, we’re re-arranging and making sure the facility can continue working in a rationalized manner.*

Speaking on behalf of staff, enrolled nurse Cynthia Khululiwe Buthelezi said the announcement by the MEC has brought much relief.

*“We were very worried. We didn’t know where we stood. There was a lot of uncertainty, hesitation and unanswered questions. But all of that is gone now. We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the government.”*

The facility will continue to render a comprehensive PHC package, seven days per week and 24 hours per day on an on-call basis. It will offer a Primary Healthcare Clinic, operate as a pick-up point for medication for chronic ailments, render mobile health services to 36 points, emergency services, maternity services, and preventative and promotive health care services to the surrounding community. It will also provide community outreach health services through Ward-Based Outreach Teams and School Health Teams. It will also be visited by a doctor once a week.