

Disabled learners at Umlazi Special School to benefit immensely as KZN Health MEC responds to their plight

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Disabled learners at an Umlazi Special School will no longer battle to access healthcare services, while contending with a shortage of basic needs such as nappies, wheelchairs, and wound dressing materials. This is thanks to the urgent intervention of KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, who today visited the Mason Lincoln Special School, accompanied by several health experts.

Situated at Umlazi V Section, on the site of the old Emalandeni Hospital, the school caters for 335 learners who are physically challenged, visually impaired, autistic, (mild) intellectually impaired, epileptic and those living with albinism. The school was founded in 1943, by a Sister Mason, who is now late. During the visit, MEC Dhlomo found that the school's learners lack a number of basic health services, and need a regular visit by a mobile clinic. Its plight was first brought to MEC Dhlomo's attention last week by his Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs counterpart, MEC Nomusa Dube-Ncube, during a school functionality monitoring visit.

Commenting on his swift response to the plight of the school, MEC Dhlomo said: *"I got a call from MEC Dube-Ncube, who told me that there are certain gaps that she's picked up at the school, which she thought some of us in health can come in and assess. Following this visit, I want to confirm that indeed there are certain gaps. All the learners here have not had a full health assessment, which creates a basic need for that for each child. We've committed to come and have the children screened. And also, we'd like to advise that the school should have at least one healthcare worker who's going to be resident here, because over 300 learners from grade R – 12 of this special category, will need someone close by to take care of their needs. We already have a team from Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital, and eThekweni health district who will come and conduct a health screening of all the learners as of next week. They will then create a data base of the learners and the challenges that they have, which I think is critical. We're responsible for the health needs of all citizens in the country, for their screening and health needs. We'd like to thank MEC Dube-Ncube for bringing this to our attention. We're going to attend to it swiftly."*

School principal Happy Busisiwe Morolong, who has been with the school since 1996, expressed her excitement, saying she was confident that the MEC's visit will change the school's fortunes and help fulfil all its health needs.



MEC Dhlomo

with learners from Mason Lincoln Special School



MEC Dhlomo

with school principal Busisiwe Morolong (in pink dress); Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital CEO Mr Gabriel Khawula; and eThekweni health district director Penny Msimango

“The MEC and management of the district have promised to bring us a mobile clinic, which will help us a great deal. They have promised to bring in a team of health specialists who will come and assist...with wheelchairs, nappies, and wound dressing materials, all of which is a positive thing for the school because we’ve been struggling with those things. On a daily basis, learners need these things, but due to budgetary constraints we’re unable to provide for all their health needs.”