

SPEECH BY KZN HEALTH MEC, NELISWA NKONYENI, ON THE
PROVINCIAL BABY FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE AWARDS
CEREMONY AT INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI CENTRAL HOSPITAL.

12TH JANUARY 2007

Distinguished Guests,
Colleagues,
Friends and Members of the Community
All protocol observed

Let us all thank the Lord, Our Maker for sparing us throughout the whole of last year and delivering us safe, healthy and positive to meet the challenges and welcome the prospects of 2007.

Singabaphathi boMnyango wezeMpilo siyabonga kakhulu ngegalelo lenu nonke kulonyaka odlule ikakhulukazi njengaloku besibhekene nezingqinamba ezize nokubheduka kwesifo se **XDR-TB**.

As we all welcome this New Year let us again affirm our commitment to serve our people and strive to achieve a **BETTER HEALTH FOR ALL**.

As a provincial department of Health we are very elated today as we celebrate the achievements of six of our institutions. These health facilities have passed the external assessment on the extent to which they have implemented the ten steps towards the successful breastfeeding. They today join others that have been bestowed the status of 'Baby Friendly'. The six institutions being:

Kwa Magwaza Hospital

Uthungulu District

Umphumulo Hospital

Ilembe District

St. Apollinaris Hospital

Sisonke District

Newcastle Hospital

Amajuba District

St. Mary's Hospital

Ethekwini District

Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital Ethekekwini District

Ladies and gentlemen this year actually marks the 15TH anniversary of the Initiative, which was launched, jointly by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1992.

Nationally there are over 203 Health Facilities that have been designated “Baby Friendly Status”. Today as a Department we are proud and happy to state with the addition of these six institutions, KwaZulu-Natal now has 45 facilities that have achieved this prestigious status. Okujabulisa kakhulu ngaloku, ukungenelela kwemitholampilo yethu emine [4] nayo ekwazile ukuthola lendondo ehlonishwayo umhlaba uphela. Imitholampilo esiyihloniphayo kulomkhakha yiloyo yase:

- **UMdumezulu** Zululand District
- **Unit 8** Zululand District
- **KwaDabeka** Ethekekwini District
- **Tongaat** Ethekekwini District

Ladies and gentlemen a health facility is designated “Baby Friendly” once the institution and staff have adhered to and implemented certain standards of operation. **The ten steps to successful breastfeeding form the basis of this:**

- Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
- Train all healthcare staff in the skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy.
- Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
- Help mothers initiate breastfeeding soon after birth.
- Demonstrate to mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they are separated from their babies.

- Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
- Practice rooming-in, allowing mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
- Give no artificial teats or dummies to breastfeeding infants.
- Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic

Inhlangano yoMhlaba yezeMpilo I World Health Organisation ihlala igqogquzela ukuthi isizwe masinakekele izingane zaso yingakho nje ike iphakamise imikhankaso ethi:

Let every mother and child count.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the benefit and security offered by breastfeeding is immeasurable.

As a department we totally agree that there is no greater joy than giving a mother her baby to hold immediately after delivery.

The initial bonding benefits not only the mother and the baby, but also the community at large. As a result children are prepared for the future generation in a loving, secure and caring manner and are well adjusted to lead in the future.

We are saying virtually all children benefit from breastfeeding, regardless of where they live. **Breastmilk is all that babies 0 to 6 months old need to stay healthy and grow.**

Breastmilk **protects kids from diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections** - two leading causes of infant death.

It stimulates their immune systems and responses to vaccinations as it contains hundreds of health-enhancing antibodies and enzymes.

Breastfeeding also offers a benefit that cannot be measured: a network opportunity to communicate love at the very beginning of a child's life.

The risk of HIV transmission through breastmilk is taken in the BFHI implementation. **A mother who is HIV positive can breastfeed her baby exclusively for six months**, therefore ensuring that the baby gets all the necessary nutrients and protection.

Furthermore in ensuring survival and healthy growth on infants and young children, mothers are encouraged to bring their children to the clinics to monitor their growth.

All children under the ages of 5 years are provided with a Road To Health Chart. Mothers are counselled on how to feed their children and also given written material to take home.

The support of the community is very important in order to sustain the initiative as well as to support and encourage the mother with her decision to breastfeed. The establishment of Breastfeeding support groups for mothers to be referred to on discharge from hospital ensures that the mother has a good support system in order to deal with any breastfeeding problems that may arise. Isiphakamiso enginaso mina njengoMphathiswa woMnyango yileso sokuthi masibambisane sisebenzele ukufeza izinjongo zezwe ngokuphathelene nama **Millenium Development Goals relating to Health:**

- Halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger
- Reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality ratio
- Reduce by three-quarters the Maternal Mortality Ratio
- Halve and begin to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS

I must point out that as a Department we are all out in ensuring the bringing up of healthy children starting with feeder clinics that prepare a women first at antenatal visits.

We also make follow ups on the mothers and babies at monthly intervals at the well baby clinic, looking not only at breastfeeding but also at how baby is growing, immunization, how the mother is feeling psychologically and also promoting general well being of both mother and baby.

The initiative therefore has been successful because of YOU. Each and every individual that has played some part in attaining this achievement is congratulated today. Uma senza imisebenzi ebheke ekukhuleni kahle kwabantwana kuhle sithole amandla emazwini anobuhlakani ka **Helen Keller**:

'The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt within the heart'.

WELL DONE.