

## Opening remarks by KZN Health MEC Neliswa Nkonyeni on the occasion of the meeting for KZN Provincial Health Council

3 April 2007

A warm welcome to all the members of this august body, it is our fervent wish that you and your brethren are well and in good health.

We meet again this year to remind each other of the tasks we committed ourselves to as we strive for A Better Health for All.

As members of the Provincial Health Council we need to know all the time that we are a body whose formation is informed by the National Health Act, Act No.61 of 2003 and as such guided by the Constitution itself.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, fellow Council members, requires of us to honour the right of every citizen to have access to:

- Health care services, including reproductive health care;
- Sufficient food and water; and
- Social security, including assistance to people who cannot support themselves and their dependents.

Respected members of the Council, your role entails providing me with advice on policy concerning any matter that will protect, promote, improve and maintain the health

status of the population of this province. This may entail epidemiological surveillance and monitoring of provincial trends with regard to major diseases and risk factors for disease and goes on to include providing guidance for the management of health districts.

For us here to be relevant to the Health needs of our people and for you as members of the Council to be able to advise the Executive appropriately, we all have to fully comprehend the Strategic Goals that the Department of Health seek to attain for our populace. These are:

- **Effective Implementation of HIV and AIDS Strategy.**
- **Strengthening of Primary Health Care and the provisioning of caring, responsive and quality health service at all levels.**
- **Addressing poverty by promoting health, preventing and managing illnesses with emphasis on lifestyle, trauma and violence.**
- **Strengthening of service delivery through Good Governance, Human Resource Management and Strategic Partnerships**
- **Infrastructure investment in health technology, communication and buildings**

In all platforms we make it clear that the Government on its own cannot win the war against disease, poverty and

helplessness hence today we have to appraise one another of stakeholders involved in the well-being of our people.

These include:

- Labour organisations that are active in the health sector
- Non-governmental and non-profit organisations whose business lies primarily in health
- For profit organisations such as hospital groups, pharmaceutical companies and health technology suppliers
- Faith based organisations that have an active interest in health care and health service delivery.
- Representative associations such as independent practitioner associations of doctors and other health professionals,
- Local environmental groups and support groups for chronic diseases, as well as
- Traditional Health Practitioners.

We also have formations that are constituted as per requirements of the National Health Act, these being:

- Public Health Hospitals Boards
- Community Health Centre and Clinic Committees
- Mental Review Board
- National Health Research Ethics Council
- Forum of Statutory Health Professional Councils

Working together, we will be able to appropriately respond to the January 8 Statement where President Thabo Mbeki

emphasises that, *'The struggle to push back the frontiers of poverty needs also to pay due attention to the health of the nation, ensuring, in particular, that the poor are able to access quality health care.'*

We are saying with the strong Council, advising me diligently, the policies of our Department would ensure that we are better equipped to provide **Preventive, Promotive, Therapeutic, Rehabilitative** and **Palliative** levels of care for all the citizens of this beautiful Province.

Respected members, this is one of the biggest Departments in the country, entrusted with the responsibility of looking after the health status of more than 10 million people.

For us to work together I feel its appropriate to state our expectations, some being:

- Loyalty from Council members
- Dedication to our Vision and Mission
- Trustworthiness
- Confidentiality on political issues
- Focus on issues, and Consultation

To improve the health status of all our people, let us work together to ensure that our policies do positively impact on the following:

- Reduction in patient waiting times – 50% @  
outpatient departments

- Improvement in patient transport system
- Improvement of physical appearance of facilities
- Improvement in staff shortage, and
- Improvement of community participation at institutions

Remember as the KwaZulu Natal Department of Health we are committed to fighting disease, fighting poverty and giving hope.