

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, on the occasion of the Fundraising Gala Dinner celebrating 60th year anniversary of Edendale Hospital

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Programme Director – Prof Rachel Gumbi

UMgungundlovu District Chaplain - Rev B.N. Bhengu

KwaZulu-Natal Premier – Honourable Senzo Mchunu

UMgungundlovu District Municipality Mayor - Cllr Y. Bhamjee

KZN Health Head of Department —Dr Sibongile Zungu

Edendale Hospital Chief Executive Officer - Mrs. Z.S.I. Ndwandwe

Edendale Hospital Systems Manager - Mr. M.G. Naidoo

Greetings to all

It gives us a great pleasure tonight to be part of the 60th Anniversary of the historic Edendale Hospital, the fourth largest healthcare institution in the country in terms of available beds.

Before I go further, allow me fellow country men and women to recognise and profusely thank the Church for the positive and constructive role it has and continue to play in uplifting the poor. Edendale Hospital would not have been if it were not for Reverend James Allison of the Methodist Church who donated the land upon which this historic hospital is built.

VIVA Methodist Church, VIVA!!

Programme Director, we are very excited that this 60th Anniversary coincides with the hour in which our country is also in the celebration mode; enjoying 20 years of emancipation from the bondages of backwardness and Apartheid.

For many of us, coming into Edendale; Sobantu and Mbali, something gets rekindled and without prodding, names of our struggle heroes get invoked; our stalwarts that had direct bearing to this institution and those that sojourned here for their illnesses.

In mind; springs up our heroes and heroines in the ilk of *Moses Mabhida; Harry 'uMntomdala' Gwala; Antony 'Mfenendala' Xaba; Selby Msimang; Archie Gumede; Dr Chota Motala; John 'Mabulala' Nene; Gourie Ramdeen; Alan Paton; Sikhumbuzo Ngwenya; Gordon Webster; Robert McBride; Mandla Ni 'Skhwakhwa' Hadebe; Bhanu Ghela; Muzikayise 'Son of Man Thusi;* – the list goes on.

Edendale as a town is important to us. In 1961, Edendale provided the venue for the meeting of the All-In African Conference, where Nelson Mandela emerged from a recently-expired ban to make one of his last important speeches as a free man.

We are thus happy to be here to celebrate the victory and resilience of this institution that survived the era of apartheid and delivered on its mandate of taking care of our people during those dark days when many Black and poor people suffered a great deal of ill health and were denied medical services or information about health.

Programme Director; it is an undeniable fact that from 1948 to 1994, racial discrimination against all black people affected people's health in many ways and these included:

- Social conditions that caused ill health
- The segregation of health services
- Unequal spending on health services
- The failure of professional medical bodies and civil society to challenge apartheid health.

It then came as no surprise then that a year after Edendale Hospital was established; the African National Congress adopted the Freedom Charter in Kliptown, Soweto where it sets out its vision for health, specifically saying:

"A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state.

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children.

The aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state."

For many years up to the day of the advent of democracy, this was not to be so. In the whole of South Africa, the healthcare institutions and facilities were built and managed with the specific aim of sustaining racial segregation and discrimination in health care.

In the greater Pietermaritzburg before Edendale Hospital was built in 1954; Black people were treated and accommodated in *grass thatched houses at the rear of Greys Hospital*.

Regardless of our bleak history, as a country under racial segregation, Edendale Hospital has prospered in its endeavors both as a healthcare institution and as a training centre in its College of Nursing.

This hospital has for decades played a pivotal role in providing the local population with high standards of care and treatment.

It was one of the first South African hospitals to open a post-operative recovery ward through which all patients pass after surgery and was the first hospital in the country to provide intensive care units for surgical and medical conditions.

Edendale was also unique in South Africa for introducing the provision of a central sterilizing department and a separate burns unit.

Today it has grown to be one of the most respected medical facilities not only in our Province but in the whole of South Africa. The hospital offers services in Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Orthopaedics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Psychiatry, and Intensive Care. Rehabilitation services include Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, and Speech therapy.

It is also our pride as a teaching hospital — a satellite campus for the Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine as part of the Pietermaritzburg Metropolitan Hospital Complex which includes Grey's Hospital.

In its format as both a regional and a district hospital; Edendale is well respected in the medical circles for its relevance and suitability in providing post-graduate teaching opportunities for all major medical disciplines.

One of the biggest symbols of pride for this colossal and historic Hospital is its College of Nursing. The College has and continues to produce highly qualified nurses for the whole country since 1954 in different disciplines that include; Midwifery; Paediatric Nursing; Orthopaedic Nursing; Operating Theatre Nursing and Critical Care Nursing amongst others.

Programme Director, today Edendale Hospital has grown into an essential part of its local community and a much needed facility for the whole of KwaZulu Natal populace providing medical care to thousands of people.

Edendale Hospital as well as all other healthcare institutions across the country today – know no colour – it is now the hour of quality healthcare for All!!

As it looks towards a healthy future, this facility is likely to continue growing in size and stature and we are proud of its recent accomplishments under democracy that entail:

- Acceleration of the ARV Rollout Programme, making it the largest site with over 10 000 patients that are currently on ARVs.
- Acceleration of HCT which includes outreach programmes. The MMC programme is also conducted. We have made strides in the Reduction of Mother to Child transmission of HIV.

- Being the only site that has a Youth Health Academy which is sponsored by Whizz Kids United to provide youth friendly services ranging from preventive to curative services.
- Establishing the Midwifery Obstetric Unit (MOU)
- Acquiring high tech medical equipment which includes CT scanner, Gene-Xpert for quicker diagnosis of TB, modern equipment for Operating Theatres, ICU's and various Departments.
- Introducing ENT services, Urology and Special Clinics.
- Being a Telemedicine site that has LAN which supports academic activities between the hospital and University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, and,
- Through its Nursing Campus offer both basic and post basic Nursing programmes which include re-introduction of post basic course and Ophthalmic Nursing.

As an institution that is in the District that pilots National Health Insurance, this Hospital will grow and benefit from the upgrades being carried out through our Revitalisation Programme. It will eventually be site of excellence and a model from which other hospitals will learn from.

To all our staff, we say, thank you for all the hard work, perseverance and love for all the people who have been presenting themselves to this institution over the years. Grow from the mistakes and omissions made and prosper from the successes attained as advised by the poet **J.J. Goldwag**:

'Refuse to accept any limiting conditions. Affirm and believe in health, strength, and success no matter what the circumstances.'

May the Lord, Almighty, Bless Edendale Hospital; its staff and patients

I thank you