

**Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the Gala Dinner for the presentation of MEC's Annual Service Excellence Awards (MASEA) at the Durban International Convention Centre**

21 February 2014

Programme Director,

KZN Health Portfolio Committee Chairperson – Hon Maggie Govender

KZN Health Committee Honourable Members

KwaZulu Natal Admin – Director General – Mr Ngidi

The Head of Department - Dr Sibongile Zungu

EThekweni Mayor – Esteemed Cllr James Nxumalo

Members of the Provincial Health Council

Leaders of the Unions

District Managers

Hospital CEOs and their Management

Community Health Centres' management

Hospital Boards' Chairpersons

Chaplains

Special invited guests

Entrants to the MASEA

Members of the Media

Good evening,

We profusely thank all the organizers of this auspicious Award Giving ceremony for their hard work in bringing all of us here tonight.

Our presence here has only one objective, which is to recognize excellence and reward those that go beyond their call of duty to ensure that we offer quality health care to our citizens.

Programme Director, an ancient Greek philosopher; **ARISTOTLE**, once said:

*'Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention; sincere effort and intelligent execution.'*

Tonight; ladies and gentlemen serves as a realization of a dream that I have harboured since 2009 when I assumed my duties as the MEC for this Department.

As mandated by the then Premier, Hon Dr Zweli Mkhize, I heeded his advice of visiting and going around Hospitals and Clinics to see for myself how our patients were treated; our institutions kept and as well as how our workforce were performing their duties. In this on-going exercise I realized that there were many staff members who go out of their way to ensure that patients are treated compassionately and in clean healing environments.

Tonight then is the hour in which we acknowledge and recognise all those that have been supportive of all the efforts encompassed in the priorities we set in 2009 that entailed:

- Overhauling Provincial Health Services: Rationalisation of health services, revitalisation of PHC, improving governance, strengthening management capacity, eliminating bureaucracy and decentralising delegations and accountability.
- Improving the efficiency and quality of Health Services; and Implementation of the National Core Standards for Quality and begin to prepare facilities for the forthcoming National Health Insurance.
- Reducing mortality and morbidity due to communicable and non-communicable diseases by coming up with appropriate responses to the burden of diseases.

I thus thank my **Manco** for supporting the notion of recognising and rewarding all those that have walked with us to the level where we are and for adopting what we are tonight, bestowing to the deserving teams - **The MEC's Annual Service Excellence Awards (MASEA)**.

In paying tribute to all those that have excelled, allow me to recall and remind you that in the 52nd Conference of the ruling party, the ANC, in 2007, a great amount of time was spent discussing challenges of the health care system. One of the resolutions of the Polokwane Conference

was an instruction to the ANC and its government to elevate both education and health as a **priority**.

For health in particular, the mandate was the attainment of the following:

- Increasing Life Expectancy
- Decreasing Maternal and Child Mortality
- Combating HIV and AIDS and decreasing the burden of disease from Tuberculosis
- Strengthening Health System Effectiveness

We also received new policy changes as was announced by our President, Hon Jacob Zuma on the 1st of December 2009 which sought to improve access to treatment and make provision for:

- All children under one year of age to get treatment if they test positive for HIV.
- All patients with both TB and HIV to get ARV treatment if their CD4 count is 350 or less.
- TB and HIV & AIDS be treated under the same roof.
- All pregnant HIV-positive women with CD4 counts of 350 or with symptoms, regardless of the CD4 count, to have access to ARV treatment.

- All other pregnant women not falling into this category, but who are HIV-positive, to receive treatment at 14 weeks of pregnancy to protect the baby.

In responding to the above mentioned directives; working together, we came up with and implemented specific programmes outlined through our Annual Policy Statements under the following THEMES:

- **2009** - SAVE LIVES. Make Health Facilities Serve the People
- **2010** - Quality health care for all
- **2011** - Quality health care for all
- **2012** -Deliver a sustainable and comprehensive health care system based on the Primary Health Care approach
- **2013** - We have turned the corner – Imisebenzi Kahulumeni Iyabonakala

Programme Director; mid-term of 2013; our then Honourable Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize, in His State of the Province Address made the following comment:

*‘For the first time in recent history, HIV and AIDS are showing signs of retreat. The number of AIDS-related deaths is declining. Since we took office in 2009 we have stabilized HIV prevalence in our Province from 39.5% to 37.4% as a direct result of our integrated approach through the Provincial Council on Aids working together with all sectors of our*

*society to ensure that our initiatives on prevention and to make antiretroviral available are successful. Utilizing a special roving team of dedicated health professionals to initiate therapy to all 550 000 deserving individuals, we can now declare that for a few years now the waiting list for anti-retroviral treatment no longer exists. It has been cleared for good.'*

This year working together we are able to boldly say:

- Prevention of mother-to-child transmission has reduced from 20.8% in 2008 to 2.1% in 2012/13.
- Aggressive expansion of anti-retroviral treatment is now the largest in the country with more than 800 000 people in the programme
- Voluntary counselling and testing has seen more than three million people being tested
- Medical circumcision that we started in 2010 has rapidly grown to exceed 300 000 to date.
- the cure rate for uncomplicated Tuberculosis has risen to 85% and defaulter rate has reduced from 12.9% in 2007 to 6.6% currently
- No death from cholera has been recorded for three years now and also very few from malaria deaths notified.
- Diarrhoea Paediatric Ward has been closed at Ngwelezane Hospital
- Great strides have been achieved in strengthening the health systems to enable us to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
- All health programmes have been integrated as part of inter-departmental collaboration in the form of Operation Sukuma Sakhe.

- Our Provincial Health Operation Centre which is a hub for communication, information and an important conduit for patient support and disaster management is regarded as a model and has been visited by delegates from the North West, Free State and Gauteng Provinces.
- KwaZulu-Natal is proceeding well in its preparations for implementation of the National Health Insurance in its three identified pilot Districts, namely, UMgungundlovu; Amajuba and uMzinyathi, and,
- We also provide health services to our Taxi drivers and commuters in Taxi Ranks because they too are important people under President's Zuma's administration.

Programme Director; all the above and more has been attained because  
*LEMPI SIYILWA SIBANINGI*

Salalela ngesikhathi uMongameli wezwe ethi:

- Bonke abantu baseNingizumu Afrika mabahambe bayohlola babheke isandulela ngculazi (HIV).
- Abesifazane abanegciwane lengculazi futhi abasathola abantwana kumele bahlole bazi nabo, ngoba uma sebazi bazothi uma sebekhulelwe basheshe beze emtholampilo
- Thina-ke uma sebekhulelwe asilindi sibaqalisa imishanguzo bengena nje ekloniki.

- Lokhu nje kukodwa kusize ukuba, bangabi nankinga kulezinyanga ezi 9 bekhulelwe, kuthi futhi uma sebebelethile sesiyakwazi ukuqinisa ukuthi abantwana babo abasulelekile ngegciwane

### *LEMPI SIYILWA SIBANINGI*

- Impumelelo ekhona iyakhombisa ukuthi *LEMPI SIYILWA* siyihlanganyele naMakhosi AseNdlunkulu; Izinduna zamaKhosi; iziMeya; amaKhansela; Onompilo; Abefundisi; Abelaphi beNdabuko; Abathandazi kanye Namavolontiya angonhlalohle emphakathini. Bonke laba esibabalayo kubalulekile ukuthi sikuqhakambise ukuthi abasebenzeli ezibhedlela kodwa basemphakathini.

Lempi sizoyinqoba ngokuthi siyilwe emphakathini ngohlelo luka **Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS)** olwasungulwa nguhulumeni waKwaZulu Natali ngo 2009.

Eminent persons in the ilk of former President of Zambia, His Excellency, Kenneth Kaunda; former President of Botswana, His Excellency Festus Mogae and one of Mozambique, His Excellency Joachim Chissano came to congratulate our King, His Majesty and our KwaZulu Natal Government for the Programme of the Medical Male Circumcision.

Impumelelo yethu ngaloluhlelo ize yaletha iphini likaMongameli weZwe uBaba U Kgalema Motlante ephelezelwa uNgqongqoshe wezeMpilo



kuzwelonke uBaba u Dr Aaron Motsoaledi kanye noNdunankulu beziFundazwe bezotusa loluhlelo lwethu. UBaba uMontlante watusa wabe esethi loluhlelo kumele lusatshalaliswe ezweni lonke.

Ngenyanga kaMasingana kulonyaka kufike ithimba le UN okuyiNhlango yeZizwe liholwa uMnum Michel Sedibe bezogcizelela ukuthi **imisebenzi kaHulumeni iyabonakala**. Bathi lempumelelo yaKwaZulu Natali bayiqophile phansi, benza ibhuku elizosatshalaliswa umhlaba wonke befakazisa ukuthi ngempela uma abaholi bebhukula bonke kuba khona izindaba ezinhle esingazixoxa

***"WE DO INDEED HAVE A GOOD STORY TO TELL"***

All the above, I must point out, has been achieved regardless of the current burden of disease placing immense physical, social, emotional and psychological demands on all of us as health care providers.

Indeed there is still a long road to travel but let us all know that we are appreciated and on the right track to an extent that in His **2014 State of the Nation Address**, Hon President had this to say on **Health**:

*The HIV and AIDS turnaround is one of the biggest achievements of this administration and we are used as a model country by the United Nations Aids Programmes, (UNAIDS).*

*Mother to child transmission of HIV has declined sharply and we have doubled the number of people who are receiving anti-retroviral treatment, from one million to 2.4 million people in 2013.*

*More than 20 million South Africans have taken the HIV test since the launch of the campaign in 2011 which indicates confidence in the health system.*

*Life expectancy is now firmly on an upward trend. South Africans are now living longer.*

As I conclude, I request that all of us be inspired by the accolades given and by these Awards. We encourage the recipients to continue to do good even if we are not watching and those that did not get tonight must know that they too are valuable members of our staff worthy to be recognised and awarded.

Indeed South Africa is a better place to live in then it was before 1994. With all of us working together, KwaZulu Natal Department of Health will continue to **provide a quality health care service that is** responsive, accessible, safe and patient-centred.

Congratulations again to all the winning teams.

I thank you