



Office of the Premier

North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY NORTH WEST PREMIER, PROF TEBOGO JOB MOKGORO, AT THE PHUTHUMA HEALTH AWARDS HELD AT THE SEASONS WEDDING AND CONFERENCE CENTRE IN MAHIKENG ON TUESDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2020

Programme Director,
MEC for Health Madoda Sambatha,
Administrators and Heads of Departments,
Senior Managers and other government officials,
The Aurum Health Institute,
The Centre for Disease control,
The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR),

Distinguished guests,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good evening.

As we meet this evening for these Phuthuma Health Awards, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced tighter restrictions last night in the fight against the spread of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reality is that we are going to have different festive season this year and as the North West Provincial Government, especially the health sector, will have to be ready for this reality facing us; that of a not-so-festive December and January holiday period.

Furthermore, health workers and all essential services will need to be on standby and readily available should the situation worsen in our province, just as they have done for the last nine months.

Ladies and gentlemen, the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the North West Province is 35 729, with 34 116 people having recovered from the coronavirus.

A total of 49 new cases were identified by yesterday in the North West.

Most regrettably, we announced five more COVID-19 related deaths, which take the number of deaths in the province to 571.

Allow me to take this opportunity to convey our sincerest condolences to the families and friends of the departed but also pass my appreciation to the dedication by health care workers who continue to do all their best in providing health care to COVID-19 patients.

I am appealing to the people of the North West to comply with the regulations as announced last night, so as not to overburden the health care system in the Province and to partner with us, as government, to bring down the growing number of infections.

As we combat the spread of the virus, we need to be mindful of the 10-point plan Programme that Government developed and implemented at the beginning of April last year meant to speedily improve the healthcare system in South Africa.

As part of implementing, managing and acceleration of the 10-point plan, the National Department of Health's HIV Cluster launched **Operation Phuthuma** on 1st April 2019.

The 10-Point Plan programme also serves as a road map towards improving the overall healthcare system and increasing access to health care while fighting the burden of disease that confronts us.

Ladies and gentlemen, point 3 of the 10-point programme is specifically about improving the quality of healthcare services and our interest is in ensuring that this key programme is implemented to improve the quality of care.

The main objective of this programme is meant to improve the quality of life and increased life expectancy for the people of the North West, in particular those people living with HIV.

Furthermore, it will also assist the country to achieve a 70 years life expectancy target for males and females by the year 2030.

We are then expected to make sure that our facilities are up to speed and are delivering on key health service delivery areas.

Our health facilities and related infrastructure are, therefore, being closely monitored on performance on key areas of service delivery and they include the safety and security of patients; cleanliness of our institutions and infection control; attitudes of staff as experienced by patients; time taken in queues either before seeing a health worker or receiving medication and the availability of drugs.

The word Phuthuma means “Hurry”.

It conveys the sense of urgency associated with achieving 90-90-90 targets by December 2020.

Meanwhile, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) defines the 90-90-90 strategy as an ambitious treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic.

Our government has aligned itself to the United Nations and World Health Organization’s effort to end the AIDS epidemic.

The Phuthuma Awards are therefore a means to reward and encourage those facilities who managed to hurry in attempting to meet these targets.

We will also, in the process, be encouraging and empowering those facilities that still need to close the gaps.

We all know that HIV and AIDS is a major public health problem all over the world and that our country faces a quadruple burden of disease.

The North West Province is also experiencing the same and Stats SA in 2018 indicated that Non-Communicable Diseases was at 35,5%, with TB and HIV contributing 28.2%, whilst communicable, maternal, neonatal and conditions relating to poor nutrition contribute 26.1% and injuries 10.2% of deaths in the Province.

New confirmed TB Infections remains the same at 13, 2% in 2018 and 13, 5% in 2019.

We need to educate our people and let them know that symptoms for TB infection include fatigue, unexplained weight loss, prolonged cough for more than two weeks as well as drenching night sweat.

Over and above these there are also signs of extra- pulmonary TB such headache, neck stiffness, decreased movement, abdominal discomfort, joints paints and swollen lymph nodes.

As these symptoms can be very mild and develop gradually, many people fail to recognise them as warning signs of TB.

Part of the Operation Phakisa is the Ideal Clinic Initiative.

An Ideal Clinic is defined as a clinic with good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medicine and supplies, good administrative processes, and sufficient adequate bulk supplies.

It uses applicable clinical policies, protocols and guidelines, and it harnesses partner and stakeholder support.

We have been working very hard and pushing you to achieve these key deliverables to make sure that our clinics comply and provide quality health services to our people.

These awards are therefore to also recognise clinics that performed well in ensuring good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medicine and

supplies, good administrative processes, and sufficient adequate bulk supplies.

We must then follow up with all the clinics that are struggling in these areas.

There must be a desktop list of all these clinics with indicators of how they perform and what interventions are being planned and implemented to bring them to the level of other good performing clinics.

While the processes mentioned above remain relevant, the 2020 Phuthuma Awards ceremony takes place in the context of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the Province had to act with agility and take drastic actions in order to curb the spread and respond to its negative impact, alongside other governments around the globe.

The Provincial Coronavirus Command Council (PCCC) continuously monitors the effects of COVID-19 on the lives of North West Citizens.

Furthermore, restrictions are eased as and when it is safe as well as necessary to do so but for now, we will need to abide to the restrictions as announced by the President last night if we are to win the battle against the spread of COVID-19.

The festive season, the resurgence and the second wave pose a serious threat to the management of COVID-19; hence government has taken

steps to manage the further spread of this virus and ensure that all of us are able to see the war on the second wave through into 2021.

All our plans must be implemented immediately including awareness campaigns, roadblocks, screening and quarantine of those who report back positive from other Provinces and the neighbouring SADC countries.

Health is an essential service. This means that we must not all go on holidays and leave our people stranded in health facilities.

There must be adequate management of personnel and their shifts in health facilities during this festive season. Our Emergency Medical Response Service must be super responsive.

In conclusion, let me pass my congratulations and well wishes to all those who will be receiving awards today.

You are making us proud. Continue to be selfless. Continue to serve our people and to make health care a priority.

I thank you.

ENDS