

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEECH BY THE MEC FOR HEALTH, MS FEZI NGUBENTOMBI AT THE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES CONFERENCE, 3-4 MARCH 2011, PROTEA HOTEL, BLOEMFONTEIN

Program Director
Dr Kabane,
Honored guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Community service for health professionals was implemented with success by this government in 2000 and since then more than 4070 community health service professionals which includes doctors, nurses and allied health professionals have touched the lives of many patients in this province.

Today we are gathered here to welcome the multi-disciplinary group of 376 community health service professionals in the Free State for 2011. This group includes medical doctors, allied health professions such as radiographers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, dentist, clinical psychologists, dieticians, speech and hearing therapists and environmental health practitioners nursing professionals.

Program Director, health service professionals, especially medical doctors are a scarce commodity in our country. We see these young professionals leave our shores for greener pastures and in many cases see the working conditions in the public service facilities as poor with heavy work loads, a perceived shortage of resources and demands from patients. One should however not forget about the tremendous impact the presence of this cadre of health professional has on the community they serve.

Program Director, I can safely say that the quality of our health care services has improved, as we are now able to provide much needed medical services in our clinics. Since the start of the community service for the allied health professionals, as a department we are now able to stretch our reach even further.

I have called this conference together with the specific aim to have an opportunity to not only welcome all our community health service professionals but also to provide a preview into the heart of the Free State Department of Health. The presentations to be presented here during the two days will focus on providing information on protocols, projects, the referral system in the Free State, human resource issues such as skills development and training and other matters. I would request that during the work sessions, delegates participate with enthusiasm as we would like to learn about the challenges facing community service professionals and how we can improve our service to you.

Lastly, my I offer a word of welcome to one and all and express my gratitude for the time you will be working in our service and contributing to a healthy and self reliant Free State community. You have been exposed to the realities of the health care in our country for a while now and would realise how badly this country needs you. The Free State province and the Department of Health are proud to be associated with your term. Make us all proud.

I thank you.