

**KZN FINANCE MEC REMARKS AT THE OPENING OF THE NETCARE
PARKLANDS HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

OVERPORT, DURBAN

15 MARCH 2022

The Netcare Parklands Hospital Management

The staff members

All invited guests

Good afternoon,

Thank you for inviting me to be part of this special moment when you see to fruition one of your hard work. It gives me great pleasure to be part of this special day.

Today I wish to pay tribute to the private health care workers; these include CEOs, doctors, nurses and general staff for their resilience. These are the people who have ensured that quality health care is maintained in high standards all the time. I can profess to this as someone who is also a client to private health care.

The private health care has always raised the bar in South Africa and a government we have taken note of their indispensable contribution in saving human life. While private health care is one of the most regulated industries in the country that has always counted as a plus for it realises that its role is a matter of life and death.

We have looked hard and with serious determination at the private health care sector as a yardstick upon which as a government we should measure ourselves in terms of high standards, quality and professionalism. This is what this government has aimed to emulate in our pursuit to providing quality health care to our people.

Gone are the days when our own state hospitals are viewed as death traps and institutions where our people go to die. Our mission as a government has been to develop and implement a sustainable, co-ordinated, integrated and comprehensive

health system at all levels. We do this while guided by trustworthiness, honesty and integrity, open communication and transparency.

Our delicate work has meant that we are one of the most litigated departments together with the SAPS by virtue of being on the frontline when it comes to interacting with our people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Having emulated the private health care sector we have sought partnerships to raise the bar even high. Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital is a glaring example of how much can be achieved through public private partnership. We did not end there, but the construction of the state-of-the-art and soon to be commissioned 500-bed Dr. Pixley ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital (PKISMH) in the PINK area is another example and a department from the norm and establishment. To date, PKISMH is 99% complete with a phased-in implementation process already having commenced in the last few months, with further aspects of the commissioning occurring incrementally going forward.

We hope today's occasion as you commission officially your emergency department will mark a period heightened and superior health care unsurpassed by any of the other efforts you have employed to better your services.

Before I close. I wish to share our gratitude as the government of KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa to the private health care sector for opening its doors to allow millions of our people to get treatment during the height of Covid 19 in the past two year.

Like the government, the private health care sector bore the brunt of this deadly pandemic which saw your resources and personnel stretched to the limit. You did not only open your doors, but helped us with testing and the rolling out of vaccines.

Indeed the coronavirus left us reeling and we are not yet out of the woods hence Finance Minister, Enoch Godongwana last month allocated an additional R15.6 billion to provincial health departments to support their continued response to COVID-19, and to bridge shortfalls in essential goods and services.

It is no secret that since COVID-19 reached our shores, we have endured successive waves of infection, the emergence of new variants and the devastating cost of nearly

100,000 recorded COVID-19 deaths. We are pleased that so far, we have administered 30 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Consequently, nearly 42% of all adults and 60% of everyone over 50 is fully vaccinated.

As His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasised in his state of the nation address last month; vaccines have proven to be the best defence we have against illness and death from COVID-19. We therefore, wish to thank the private health care for their relentless support in helping the government fight the pandemic and meet her targets of vaccinating millions of our people.

The nation owes a great debt of gratitude to the dedicated health care workers – both public and private - and other frontline staff who put their health and their lives at risk to care for the ill and vulnerable during this pandemic.

We also wish to urge the private health care sector to continue assisting us with employment opportunities through sustainable jobs. We are doing our bit as a provincial government. For example in 2022/23, the department plans to award 120 new bursaries to first year nursing students. The KZN College of Nursing is to be accredited by the Nursing Council and Council on Higher Education to offer Post-Graduate Diploma (Nurse Specialist) programmes and be able to implement and place 100 nurses in training on the Post Graduate Nurse Specialist Programmes.

In my Provincial Budget Speech last week I revealed that in total, 155 students trained in Cuba qualified to be placed as medical interns in 2021 in various hospitals. Currently, there are 21 students who are still studying in Cuba and 43 Students returned in July/August 2021 to complete their 18-months final-year training in South Africa as part of the integration of the programme at various universities. There are 249 Cuban medical students that are currently performing their medical internship in and outside of the province, with 169 in the second year and 80 in the first year of their internship. There are 199 students who are now doctors and are doing community service.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is initiatives like these that assist us to move our health care sector forward. I wish to congratulate you tonight for the opening of this critical emergency department which will enhance your efforts in saving thousands of lives.

As they say in medicine *Vivat salvus* – may lives be saved!

I thank you.