



***MEC Dr. Bandile Masuku Speaking notes on the opening of the
GDOH Occupational Health and Wellness Centre and Travel
Medicine Centre, 27 August 2019, 45 Commissioner Street,
Johannesburg***

Members of the GDOH Senior Management Services

Representatives of the National Institute for Occupational Health

**Representatives of the Oversight Department of The Office of the
Premier and the Department of Labour**

GDOH Staff

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning,

Firstly, thank you to all staff members of the department that have honoured this invitation. I am excited about the opening of the Occupational Health and Wellness Centre at the GDOH Head Office. This

centre is one of ten of its kind that as a department we have committed to opening by March 2020.

The other nine centres will be in the four central hospitals, with each of the five districts also having such a centre. This centre is also paired with a Departmental Travel Clinic services, this model being the first to be established in this way by the 6th Administration. The Occupational Health Safety and Wellness of our staff is one area where we as a department have committed to channel our efforts in line with our priority of improving staff morale of employees in the department.

The Occupational Health and Wellness Centre will be available for free to all staff members of the Department of Health, while the travel medicine clinic will be open to the public and serving as a critical source of revenue for the GDOH.

Last week the Senior Management Team concluded the Department's strategic planning session, where we began the consolidation of the departments new five-year Strategic Plan for the 2020-2025 planning period.

Key to these discussions was the reality that the department has over the past few years experienced some unfortunate events which have undoubtedly affected our staff members at a mental, emotional, physical and social level. The occurrences around the Life Esidimeni and the burning of the Bank of Lisbon last year, have negatively impacted members of staff across the board.

As the leader of this department I am also very aware of the issues that the staff is facing. As you know I started off my term as MEC by ensuring that I met with all staff members – junior and senior staff members separately. This exercise was important for my office and for me specifically to get a grasp of the challenges that people are facing, and also to begin to think about how these can be addressed.

The department of Health is by far the most demanding department to work in, both our facilities and our staff is working under immense pressure.

I also know that even at the level of the different units within the Central Office there are a number of issues that we need to resolve; these

including stumbling blocks in career progression and growth for our junior staff members, as well as under and over utilisation of staff members.

I believe that many of you are aware that the department is working on the Employee Value Proposition framework which is meant to specifically address how we boost staff morale, and also explore areas of intervention to ensure that there are established career development pathways for the youth of our department.

As the department we recognise and appreciate the efforts of our staff members and want to offer you the needed emotional, mental and physical health support you require. I know that the amount of pressure that many of us face in the department can make it difficult for us to attend to our health the way that we should.

This facility and others that are going to be rolled out in the next few months are also aimed at making life easy for our employees, such that they are able to access quality basic health care conveniently. As a medical doctor in my past life, I fully understand how important convenience is, and my desire is for the staff to consider this centre as a

way - we as the leadership are trying to meet our employees half way and ensuring that they have their basic health needs met.

This centre will render Comprehensive Occupational Health Services for the 1100 employees at the GDOH head office. It will include specialist Occupational Health Services and oversight for all the GDOH health establishments in the entire Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework focusing on these pillars:

- HIV&AIDS and TB Management – contributing to the management of HIV&AIDS and TB and our 90-90-90 strategic objective.
- Wellness Management (Physical, Psychosocial, Spiritual Wellness and Work Life Balance)
- Health and Productivity Management to minimise the impact of occupational diseases and non-communicable diseases on the absenteeism and presentism.

There is an emerging optimism in Gauteng Health, this optimism underpinned by shifting perceptions of the department by the public, and of the staff towards the direction that we are taking as a department.

Our Head office is the nerve centre of health in Gauteng and should as such lead in ensuring that the wellness of its staff is a priority. We hope that we will soon be working with the other departments to establish these centres in the respective buildings and contribute to the wellbeing of all public servants in the province.

I am happy that we have been able to open this centre within the 100 Days as planned. There is no doubt that the work to rebuild Gauteng Health has begun in earnest. The onus is upon us to ensure that we maintain this standard as a department. A standard that makes sure that all commitments are kept and that the people of Gauteng are satisfied with our services.

As so goes the cliché 'Your health is your health', with this I strongly encourage all staff members to utilise the services of this centre offers.

Let's grow Gauteng health together!

Thank you.