

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS, Ms NOMANTU NKOMO-RALEHOKO DURING THE GDoH AND WELLNESS STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION HELD AT MISTY HILLS FROM THE 02- 04 AUGUST 2023.

Programme Director of the session

Acting Head of Department of Health in Gauteng, Mr L.A. Malotana

Wits School of Public Health: Prof Laetitia Rispel

World Health Organisation Representative : Dr Koku

University of Johannesburg : Dr Ndlovu

Gauteng Department Of Health / Wits: Prof L. Chauke

Office of the Auditor General: Ms Hefer

Office Of the Premier: Mr S. Mtshali and Mr L. Akhalway

Chief Director - Public Finance Provincial Treasury: Mr R. Rasivhetshele & Ms V. Human.

GCRO: Mr. G. Gotz

DPME: Mr T. Masilela

Colleagues

Good Morning

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that I welcome you all to the Gauteng Department of Health's strategic session. I extend a warm appreciation to each of our invited guests who are part of the programme for the next two days for their presence today, representing diverse capacities and bringing a wealth of expertise to this gathering. Your participation is of utmost importance as we convene to shape the future of healthcare in the Gauteng province.

In this strategic session, we come together as a cohesive group, united by a shared mission to deliver quality healthcare services to our communities. Your presence here, with your varied backgrounds and professional acumen, enriches our discussions and enhances our ability to develop innovative solutions and strategic initiatives.

We firmly believe that partnership is the key to progress, and your collective knowledge and insights will significantly contribute to our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Through this collaborative effort, we can develop comprehensive strategies that cater to the diverse needs of our communities and drive positive change in the healthcare landscape.

As we engage in fruitful discussions, let us remain open-minded, receptive to feedback, and resolute in our determination to create a healthier and more equitable Gauteng. Though the challenges we face may be significant, I firmly believe that with the collective efforts of all stakeholders present here, we can transform these challenges into opportunities for progress.

Distinguished guests and colleagues, as we convene for this crucial Lekgotla, it is essential that we keep at the forefront of our minds the fact that we are now in the last mile of the 06th administration's political term. This realization compels us to recognize the significance and urgency of our mission.

Our principal goal is to accelerate the delivery of healthcare services with agility and a deep sense of urgency, especially in areas that have historically faced challenges in accessing quality healthcare, namely our townships, informal settlements, and hostels.

While we take pride in the progress we have made thus far in these areas, we must also be honest with ourselves and acknowledge that there is still much ground to cover. The delivery of comprehensive healthcare services cannot be deemed complete until we have reached every corner of these underserved places in the province and met the needs of every individual residing there.

For us to achieve this objective, we must collectively creative idea and develop innovative programmes that target the specific and diverse healthcare needs of these marginalized populations. These programmes should be meticulously designed to address the unique challenges faced by residents in townships, informal settlements, and hostels.

We need to approach this task with creativity, compassion, and a commitment to leaving no one behind. In our pursuit of accelerated healthcare delivery, we must also be cognizant of the administrative complexities that may impede our progress.

As we move forward with urgency and determination in the coming months, it is vital to take a moment to reflect on the substantial progress we have accomplished together. Just eight months ago, we often spoke about "turning the tide," a concept that might have seemed more theoretical than concrete to some at the time. However, today, I am proud to announce that we are witnessing undeniable evidence that the tide has indeed turned in our favour.

This significant transformation has been made possible by the dedication, hard work, and collaborative spirit of each and every one of you. Your collective efforts have led to impressive achievements that have profoundly impacted the lives of those we serve. We must acknowledge and celebrate these successes as we continue our journey towards advancing healthcare delivery in Gauteng.

As we stand at the forefront of healthcare innovation, it is crucial to acknowledge that the achievements we have made in implementing the Forensic Pathology Services Digital Fingerprint System are not only notable within our province but are, in fact, the first of their kind in the entire country and the continent. Gauteng health department is leading the charge in revolutionizing forensic pathology services by harnessing cutting-edge technology to elevate the identification and confirmation of deceased individuals.

The pioneering nature of our intervention not only fills us with immense pride but also positions us as trailblazers in healthcare advancement on a national scale. We boldly embrace the role of being agents of positive change, driven by our dedication to setting new standards and pushing the boundaries in healthcare service delivery.

As other provinces and stakeholders look to us with awe and admiration, we have a unique opportunity to showcase the sheer power of innovation and collaboration in achieving transformative outcomes. Through generously sharing our experiences and knowledge with others across the country, we play a critical role in uplifting the overall landscape of forensic pathology services nationwide.

Indeed, the list of our achievements is extensive, and each milestone represents a testament to our commitment to excellence in healthcare. From successful celebrations of Mandela Day, where we engaged with our communities in acts of kindness and service, to the remarkable success of our surgical marathon, we have

consistently demonstrated our dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of others.

The groundbreaking achievement of the first Sutureless Aortic Valve Replacement at Charlotte Maxeke Cardiothoracic Department and Wits University Medical School, in partnership with Vertice Medtech Group, showcases our pursuit of cutting-edge medical advancements that bring hope and healing to patients.

In addition, witnessing the skilled hands of Bheki Mlangeni performing an operation at Sebokeng Hospital is a testament to the expertise and capabilities of our healthcare professionals. The opening of clinics like Zone 17 in Sebokeng and the refurbishment of facilities like Phillip Moyo further demonstrate our dedication to expanding access to quality healthcare services.

In the midst of our many successes, we were also faced with heart-wrenching tragedies that brought immense grief and sorrow to our hearts. One such tragic moment was the devastating Boksburg Gas Explosion, an incident that shook our communities to their core. It was a day marred by un-imaginable loss and pain when a fuel tanker carrying liquefied petroleum gas exploded underneath a railway bridge, claiming precious lives, including those of our dedicated healthcare workers.

The loss of lives in this horrific explosion, including our very own healthcare heroes, struck a deep chord within our hearts. These brave souls had selflessly dedicated their lives to healing and caring for others, and their untimely departure has left a profound void in the lives of their families, colleagues, and patients.

Tragedy struck again, just ten weeks ago, in the town of Hammanskraai, when we faced an outbreak of Cholera. This relentless disease claimed lives with a cruel and unyielding grip, casting a shadow of fear and uncertainty over our communities. The loss of lives during this outbreak has been profoundly tragic, and the pain and grief that followed are etched into our hearts.

During these difficult moments, our resolve was tested, and our empathy was called upon in ways we could never have imagined. We witnessed the unwavering dedication and bravery of our healthcare professionals who laboured tirelessly, risking their own well-being, to save lives and provide solace to those in need. Their selfless commitment and compassion became signal of hope in the darkest of times.

These tragedies touched us deeply, as they reminded us of the immense responsibility we carry in safeguarding the well-being of our communities. Each life lost, especially those of our healthcare workers, leaves an irreplaceable void in the hearts of loved ones, and their absence is a poignant reminder of the urgency of our mission.

Distinguished guests and colleagues, in this strategic session, we must address areas of improvement where progress has been made but not optimally. Achieving a Clean Audit of both Financial and Non-Financial Performance is essential to enhance credibility and dispel negative perceptions related to our supply chain. Addressing asset management reconciliations and ensuring timely supplier payments are also crucial steps towards efficiency. We must leave no room for fruitless, wasteful, and irregular expenditure, prioritizing prudent financial practices for a successful future.

Our firm commitment to realizing a responsive, value-based, and people-centered organization remains resolute. Significant strides have been made, such as addressing surgical backlogs and enhancing oncology services. However, our dedication does not end there.

We are determined to do even more in these areas and explore other potential opportunities to improve the overall experience of care for our people. This strategic session will be dedicated to unpacking and refining these interventions, as we collectively work towards a healthcare organization that surpasses expectations and positively impacts the lives of our communities.

Colleagues, the field of healthcare heavily relies on human resources, and it is imperative that we prioritize the wellness and safety of both our staff and patients. To achieve this, all outstanding interventions must be meticulously planned with clear roadmaps for successful execution.

It is essential that we prioritize the wellness and safety of our staff and patients, given the human resource-intensive nature of healthcare. We must dedicate significant attention to these critical issues during this gathering. It is imperative that we meticulously plan and execute all outstanding interventions with clear roadmaps for success.

The story on governance and leadership must undergo a profound change. To achieve this, we must prioritize key strategic change drivers like Queue management systems and electronic records, addressing them with urgency. Additionally, we need to focus on improving the crucial aspects of Recruitment and retention in the Department. These actions will propel us towards a future of enhanced efficiency and excellence in healthcare service delivery.

Once again, thank you for your untiring dedication and passion. Collectively, let us embrace the future with optimism and determination as we set forth on this transformative path.

Thank you, and may we stand united in our pursuit of a healthier, thriving Gauteng during this momentous period.