

**DRAFT SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF HEALTH: DR MJ PHAAHLA AT THE HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF PHOLA CLINIC**

**PHOLA CLINIC, EMALAHLENI, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.**

**THURSDAY, 30 AUGUST 2023**

Programme Director,

Premier of Mpumalanga Province, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane,

Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Mr Gwede Mantashe,

MEC for Health, Mpumalanga Province, Ms Sasekani Manzini,

Mayor of eMalahleni Local Municipality, Cllr L Mabuza,

Cllr Lindiwe Mahlangu, MMC for Local Economic Development, Nkangala

District Municipality, Cllr Lindiwe Mahlangu,

Chief Executive Officer, Seriti Resources, Mr Mike Teke,

Heads of Government Departments present,

Chief Corporate & Community Relations Officer Seriti Resources, Mr

Thabo Masike,

Chief Operations Officer, Seriti Resources, Mr Raymond Makgota,

Managers from the national and provincial departments present here

Management and staff of Phola Clinic

Esteemed guests

In its 2008 World Health Report, which carried the theme ‘Primary Health Care: Now more than ever’, and which coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Alma-Ata Declaration adopted in Kazakhstan in 1978, the World Health Organization (WHO) re-asserted the vision of PHC as “a set of values and principles for guiding the development of health systems”.

The WHO also advanced four sets of essential reforms that created a nexus between the values of primary health care, the expectations of citizens and the common health performance challenges that cut across all contexts. These were: (1) universal coverage reforms to ensure that health systems contribute to health equity; (2) service delivery reforms that re-organise health services around people's needs and expectations; (3) public policy reforms that secure healthier communities; and (4) leadership reforms that replace command and control with the inclusive, participatory, negotiation-based leadership required by the complexity of contemporary health systems.

Fifteen years later, in 2023, this set of reforms remains pertinent, particularly as the global community strives towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC), and because South Africa has recorded variable progress towards these goals. Worldwide, nations have committed to the attainment of UHC, and enshrined this in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 – a horizon that coincides with South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP re-affirmed the country's commitment to establishing a community-orientated primary health care approach.

In keeping with global developments, over the almost 30 years of democracy in South Africa, the government has led the transformation of the health system from being fragmented, inequitable, racially segregated and predominantly curative, into a comprehensive and integrated health system based on PHC principles. Access to PHC services, measured in terms of headcounts, has increased from 67 million in 1998 to 106 million in 2023.

Efforts to continuously enhance the quality of PHC services include the Ideal Clinic Realisation and Maintenance Programme which resulted in 2 046 facilities achieving ideal status in the 2022/23 financial year. This amounts to 60% of our clinics conforming to Ideal Clinic standards, compared to 0% in 2014.

The building and commissioning of this clinic contribute immensely to South Africa's strive towards universal health coverage and in essence our strive to bring quality PHC services closer to where people live, learn, work and play, and I therefore commend the collaboration between the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, the provincial government of Mpumalanga and Seriti Resources to bring this initiative to fruition.

I welcome the fact that this facility has a community health worker team that does outreach into the community, to do health promotion and screening for priority conditions to ensure that individuals and families are referred for counselling and treatment where required. I trust that this clinic has already established firm working relationships with surrounding early childhood development centers and schools to facilitate optimal health for toddlers, children and youth.

The working relationship with environmental health officers from the sub-district must be maintained to ensure that the water supply to this clinic is according to prescribed standards.

When one looks at the list of top conditions that patients present with at this clinic namely, HIV related diseases, TB, Hypertension, Diabetes Mellitus, Asthma, Congestive Cardiac Failure and Pneumonia, it is of significance that Phola Clinic is implementing the three streams of PHC as prescribed by the Ideal Clinic Framework.

These three streams are (1) preventative services, (2) acute minor ailments and (3) chronic conditions. Chronic conditions include both non-communicable and communicable conditions. The implementation of the three streams is in line with the Adult and Child Primary Care training programme which the National Department of Health established for doctors and nurses to ensure that patients are seen holistically.

This programme facilitates that a person presenting with both a communicable and a non-communicable disease (co-morbidity) is not sent to different consulting rooms for consultation, diagnoses and treatment. It also ensures that patients do not queue at the pharmacy after a consultation.

Programme Director,

Minister Mantashe, Premier and MEC, I appreciate that the provincial health Department has ensured that Phola clinic is periodically serviced by speciality services such as nutrition, psychology, and eye-care. Thus, I urge the province to ensure that this clinic is also supported with dental services since there is a dental room but the dental equipment still needs to be procured.

In conclusion chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, I once again extend my sincere appreciation to all involved in the building, commissioning and continued functioning of Phola Clinic. Collaborations such as this puts South Africa on a strong footing for achieving the sustainable development and NDP goal of universal health coverage.

I thank you for your attention.