

NW health tables plan to boost workforce

In a bid to increase its health workforce, the North West health department says more than 700 medical students will be leaving Cuba to come and do their final 6th year of their medical degree course in South Africa.



Magome Masike, North West health MEC

“The integration programme for these 6th-year students will take place in a period of 18 months. Sixty-five of these students come from this province. In the following year, 2019, another estimated 100 or more of the 6th year integration programme will be expected from this province.

“At the end of next year, we will have 65 new interns, and at the end of 2020, we will be having another estimated number of over 100 new interns in our hospitals. These are students who were born and grew up in this province,” said provincial Health MEC, Magome Masike.

Masike tabled the plan to increase the health workforce during the provincial department’s budget speech.

Through the South Africa-Cuba exchange programme, the department said it hopes to boost its staff at hospitals and clinics with the newly trained medical officers who are products of the communities that they will serve.

Long-term plan

In 2017, a total of 420 professional nurses were produced from college and North West University. In addition to this, 168 post basic nurses graduated in 2017, while 202 nurses were certificated as enrolled and auxiliary nurses.

A total of 30 students graduated in medicine in 2017/18. The breakdown is as follows: 18 in the Nelson Mandela/ Fidel Castro programme and 12 in the local universities. A total of 22 students graduated as allied health professionals during 2017/2018.

“This demonstrates that our long-term plan to deal with shortage of health professionals especially doctors is finally beginning to bear fruits. I believe the time is coming in this country and province when our health workers will speak the same language with our patients,” said the MEC.

Hospital dashboard improves delivery of medicine

With regards to improving service delivery in the province, the department rolled out a hospital dashboard which keeps track of availability of medicine supplies in hospitals and clinics.

“We are committed to ensuring availability of essential drugs and medical supplies in all our facilities all the time. I am happy to report that a hospital dashboard has been rolled out to all hospitals to monitor availability of medicines at hospital level.

“Availability of medicines has improved to 86% before the labour unrest and community protests although supplier challenges such as delayed and short supply are still experienced. Material handling equipment i.e pallet jacks, electric stackers, steel ladders have been procured and have improved operations in the warehouse,” he said

In the 2018/19 financial year, Masike said the department will ensure continued monitoring of availability of hospital level medications through the dashboard

“We will also fast track implementation of direct delivery of medicines to the hospitals by ensuring that 70% are directly delivered by the end of the financial year,” he said.

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