



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Metropolitan Centre, 158 Loveday Street. Braamfontein

P O Box 1049, Johannesburg, 2000

Tel: +27 11 407 7558 Fax: +27 11 339 5704

Princess Clinic: Launch of Extended Hours Pilot Project

31 October 2016

Extract of speech delivered by the Executive Mayor, Cllr. Herman Mashaba

It gives me great pleasure to be here at the launch of extended operating hours for the Princess Clinic in Roodepoort – a pilot project I believe is bound to go a long way in providing improved health services for the majority of our poor communities at their doorstep.

It is also the realisation of one of the commitments in our ten point plan I announced soon after taking office.

It is my dream that if successful, we can then roll this project out at clinics across our City with an end goal of throwing away the keys to clinics.

This is the start of a very important road to transforming health care, not only in Princess, but across our City.

I would like to thank the MMC for Health and Social Development, Cllr Mpho Phalatse and her team for making this vision a reality.

The pilot we are here today to launch will see the extension of service hours from the normal eight hours to 15 hours per day – Monday to Friday. In the past this clinic, like all others across this City, was only open from 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. This is wholly inadequate to deal with the serious health issues our communities face.

The Princess Clinic will now be open from 7am to 10pm, Monday to Friday.

In addition, the clinic will now also be open between 7am and 1:30pm on Saturdays.

Social work services are currently provided once a week at the clinic. A social worker will now be dedicated to the area being serviced by the Princess Clinic from 11am to 7pm, Monday to Friday.

Their focus will be on community development and community mobilisation. We must transform clinics from being mere healthcare facilities to being multi-functional centres where events such health workshops and local drug action community meetings can be hosted.

We are therefore investing a lot of energy into creating a healthy society through Ward Health and Clinic Committees. Our best chance of succeeding in delivering a pro-poor programme, as our health workers say, is in ensuring that “health is in the hands of our people” at grass-root level.

On my first visit to Princess, I came into contact with members of the Maziko family who lived in a small two room shack without water or electricity. The oldest daughter had contracted TB and suffered from two fits per day. She couldn't go to school for more than 18 months. The son had asthma and the youngest daughter was displaying similar symptoms to her older sister before she was diagnosed with TB.

The residents of Princess are forever etched in my heart and they should never have to suffer such indignity and deprivation of basic rights.

Their experience is symptomatic of a far larger problem within our communities that were neglected by the previous administration in Johannesburg.

In a period of eight months, the Princess Clinic went from seeing 1000 patients per month to over 2300 per month on average.

According to the Johannesburg's Health and Social Development business plan 2016/17, the City is unable to recruit and retain the required skilled workforce which has resulted in a shortage of critical staff and an inability to cope with increased service demands.

We are committed to addressing these serious problems. We cannot allow the services provided at our clinics to regress or collapse.

We must work tirelessly to increase the capacity of these facilities and improve the working conditions of our healthcare professionals to ensure that clinics never run short of medical personnel.

In acknowledging the plight of our staff who have made great sacrifices and shown a great deal of commitment to their work, the City of Johannesburg and the Provincial Government are jointly working to find a solution to these challenges.

We also ask communities to work with us to prevent illegal dumping and those who are not complying must be reported to the authorities.

Healthy people and a healthy environment go hand in hand.

Research has shown that there is an enormous payoff from investing in health. Reducing a country's mortality rate has accounted for about 11% of recent economic growth in low-income and middle-income countries.

Our health is vital to our success. If our residents are healthy they are able to work, earn a living and contribute to the growth of our economy.

Herman Mashaba

Executive Mayor

City of Johannesburg

For further information, please contact:

Gabu Tugwana

Spokesperson

Office of the Executive Mayor

City of Johannesburg

Tel: 011 407 7040, Cellular: 082 495 5673, Email: gabut@joburg.org.za