

BUDGET DEBATE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**VOTE 3
07 July 2009
ISAAC SIPHO MFUNDISI
UNITED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

The combination of health and Social Development into one department places a very big responsibility on those charged with running it.

This is so because if some local municipality is failing the health of the people is affected, if the recession deepens the socio-economic conditions deteriorate and there is need for social assistance.

We however hope that with the Premier indicating that leadership should prevail by putting the provincial Aid council under her ambit, there will be synergy between the department and the highest office in the province.

The number of HIV and AIDS wellness centres will hopefully be increased and patients on antiretroviral treatment will also be increased by 2011.

Concerns that cannot be wished away remain however. The number of litigations against the department is rising. We hope in the process the

Hon MEC will shed light on how far the issue of the unaccounted for corpse of Mr Nel is; similarly she will also cast light on the unhappiness among the Mankwe people about the imminent downgrading of the George Stegmann Hospital.

One way in which the department of Health can assist us as people is the quality of care for patients. More often than not we hear of a patient who went missing while in hospital and in most cases are found dead in the surrounds of hospitals. All we ask Hon MEC is that just to take care of the people left in the custody of your hospitals.

Cleanliness in most facilities is wanting and we as the UCDP appeal to the MEC and all involved to note that we cannot speak of health in filth.

We are scared of the H1N1Influenza which has found its way into the Republic. Hopefully communities will be educated on how to detect same and what to do if so noticed.

Much as we may wish to have a healthy nation by 2014 in accordance with the set Millennium Development Goals all that will be an inaccessible mirage if our health facilities still have poor managerial

skills, unsatisfactory maintenance and repair services, individuals who do not want to take responsibilities for their actions and poor staffing levels in all areas.

We are fortunate that the recent strike by doctors did not affect our health facilities but we know we are not out of the woods yet. The sooner the Occupational Specific Dispensation issue is resolved, the better. The country will hold their bated breath until 21 July the last day by which doctors have to make their intentions known on the strike.

Poverty levels in the country and the North West in particular seem to have reached unprecedented heights. This is exacerbated by the fact that food security is hard to come by. Traditional methods of ensuring food availability are no longer used because the many monetary grants make people dependent thereon.

We have nothing against grants but we say people should be taught and assisted to make a living for themselves. The Chinese proverb of teaching one to catch fish instead of feeding him on fish comes into play here. These hand outs encourage indolence and dependency.

They also lend a hand in early child bearing as each child from a poor household is entitled thereto.

It is lamentable that there are no strong civil organisation that could be taking the issues of the public seriously. The matter is left in the hands of opposition parties whom the provincial government sees and takes as a nuisance instead. The only vocal NGO is SANCO that has turned to be a sycophant of the ruling party. We need some independent NGO's and CBO's to keep not only the department but the government too on their toes on social welfare issues.

The UCDP calls on all our people to revisit Botho/ubuntu so that we cut down on the institutionalisation of our next of kin. Our senior citizens should live among us and not be sent to old age homes; this also applies to young children. As in the days of old families should share the kids among themselves and assist them