

**Speaking notes of the MEC of Health in Mpumalanga, Ms.
S.J. Manzini on the Occasion of the Launching of Provincial
Traditional Health Practitioners Forum at Lynnville
Community Hall, Emalahleni Local Municipality on the 10th
December 2019.**

Programme Director,

Leaders from the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders

Executive Mayors Present here,

Speakers of Municipal Council,

Chief whips of Municipal Council,

Member(s) of the Mayoral Committee,

Leaders of Moral Regeneration,

Leaders of Civil Society,

Head of Department,

Delegates to the Forum,

Officials from the Departments and Municipal Officials

All Traditional healers of Mpumalanga

Sanibonani !!!

It is a great honour for me to pronounce a few words of congratulations as we are launching the Provincial Traditional Health Practitioners Forum. Our sincere gratitude goes to all those distinguished individuals and institutions that have made this beautiful day a reality.

Prominent among those we have to pay tribute to, would be our Local Municipalities who played a pivot role in supporting the formation of Traditional Health Practitioners' structures from the local municipality level to where we are today.

We are grateful to our main guests who brought us all here together; the Traditional Health Practitioners - I know that there would not have been any movement towards the realization of what we are celebrating today, had it not been for your commitment, support and active participation.

Today we are here to write a history in the books of the Provincial Department that for the first time, the province is having a formal structure of the Traditional Health Practitioners that will be dealing with issues of Traditional medicine. A structure that has been chosen by the Traditional Health Practitioners themselves.

The inauguration of the Provincial Traditional Health Practitioners Forum is a historic occasion and a significant milestone towards integrating African Traditional Medicine into the National Health System; and recognizing the contribution that traditional medicine plays not only to healing and the quality of life, but to the economy and socio-economic development of our people and communities.

As an integral part of Indigenous Knowledge systems, Traditional Medicine has been recognized and endorsed by the World Health Organization since the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration of Primary Health Care as well as recently the African Union in its Plan of Action on Traditional Medicine (2001 to 2010 extended to 2020).

The primary role of the Provincial Traditional Health Practitioners forum will be to assist the Department of Health to achieve its objectives of a long and healthy life for the people of Mpumalanga.

Today marks an important milestone where Traditional Health Practitioners are part and parcel of our strategic partners in our quest to ensure a healthy Mpumalanga. It is an undisputed fact that majority of our people particularly in the rural communities visit Traditional Health Practitioners more regularly than medical doctors.

Given this reality, it becomes more critical that Traditional Health Practitioners are formally organized to avoid bogus healers who kill our people and terrorize society. Traditional health practitioners, pastors, traditional leaders should all work together to deal with the barbaric brutal killings of women and children for muti purposes.

We acknowledge that in our province many Primary Health Care facilities have been working in collaboration with Traditional Health Practitioners to contain childhood diseases like Diarrhoea and Vomiting, HIV/AIDS and TB, mental illness and many others, and we urge all of our Traditional Health Practitioners to continue to forge forward the collaboration; where it was not happening it should start happening.

Our focus must be on proper training of Traditional Health Practitioners in health promotion, public education, for them to recognize symptoms for referral to health facilities in time, but also Traditional Health Practitioners must go beyond the call of healing and also participate in Clinic Committees and Hospital Boards; because I believe they can play a very pivotal role in shaping our services and provide that much needed link between the health care facility and the community.

The mandate of the Traditional Health Council is drawn from the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution; the National Health Act, 2003 (Act 61 of 2003) as well as the Traditional Health Practitioners Act of 2007 (Act No 22 of 2007).

The Traditional Health Practitioners Act specifically provides for:

1. A regulatory framework to ensure efficacy, safety and quality of Traditional Health Services
2. Treatment, and preventative measures in Traditional Medicines.
3. Objectives, Quality, Universal Norms and Standards on Traditional Medicine

The objectives of the forum as provided for in terms of Section 5 of the Act are to:

- a) Promote public health awareness on health issues
- b) Ensure the quality of health services that are provided within traditional health practices
- c) Protect and serve the interests of members of the public who use or are affected by the services of traditional health practitioners
- d) Promote and maintain appropriate ethical and professional standards required from traditional health practitioners
- e) Promote and develop interest in traditional health practice by encouraging research, education and training
- f) Promote contact between the various fields of training within traditional health practice in the Republic and to set standards for such training
- g) compile and maintain a professional code of conduct for traditional health practice

h) Ensure that traditional health practice complies with universally accepted health care norms and values.

The new Leaders of the Provincial Traditional Health Practitioners Forum will assist the province to:

1. Protect and enhance the Indigenous Knowledge System in the field of Medicine
2. Address public concerns over unscrupulous and bogus practitioners and practices under the guise of Traditional Medicine, and
3. Enhance our capacity towards attaining the vision of 'A Long and Healthy Life for all'.

In conclusion may I say that it is only through hard work and perseverance together and in harmony that we will succeed as a province, as Frederick Douglas jr. pointed out in his Autobiography:

'There are those who profess to favour progress yet deprecate agitation. These are people who want crops without ploughing the field. They want the rain without thunder and lighting, and the ocean without the roar of its many waters.'

Our greatest glory in this journey and partnership will not be in never failing, but in rising up every time we fall. For this Forum to be able to deliver its mandate we all need to be resilient and persistent in our mission and work together towards our common goal of a healthy society for the people of Mpumalanga.

May I formally announce the members of the Provincial Forum as elected by this house

Chairperson of the Forum is

I wish you all the best in the role of being the members of the Provincial Traditional Health Practitioners forum and I know that you will make an impact in the fight against disease and ill- health in the province.

Thank you