



SPEECH NOTES BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIASON MR BHEKI CELE DURING THE EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS LAUNCH ON THE 7TH MARCH 2008.

Protocol observed

- ? Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for attending the launch of our Employee Health and Wellness Programme.

- ? We are gathered here today simply because, as public servants employed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport we have realised the importance of us coming together under one roof and engaging in lifestyle issues. No sober-minded person will ever deny the fact that it is our lifestyle that is causing us to suffer either through road accidents or diseases.

- ? The KZN Department of Transport is proud of the fact that it has taken innovative steps towards addressing the serious problem of lifestyle within the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Department is currently the only active government department throughout South Africa, apart from the Department of Health, to implement an Extensive Employee Wellness Programme of this nature for all its employees.

- ? The programme is aimed at all aspects of health, including but not limited to psychological, behavioral, attitudinal and emotional perspectives. The Department adopted a more holistic approach to assist its employees with problems related to physical health, nutrition, hygiene, social issues and increasing the lifespan of HIV infected employees. The ultimate goal is to keep the workforce productive and decrease absenteeism.

- ? To this end, our employees receive ongoing education and awareness on various aspects of wellness, including HIV and AIDS, Alcohol and Substance Abuse, and Disability, through various projects and workshops that are undertaken.

- ? As the Department of Transport values the services and contributions of all its officials and acknowledges that they all form an integral part of the Department to defend the weak, it also realises that it is more cost effective and beneficial to all parties to retain trained and experienced officials.

- ? Our Wellness clinics offer a very comprehensive treatment programme. A number of patients are identified with various chronic illnesses, and given treatment and medical advice immediately. A qualified Chiropractor visits all regions on a monthly basis to attend to all ergonomic related ailments. This is proving to be a great benefit to all staff and the numbers attending are increasing at each clinic.

- ? On average 2340 patients are seen monthly by our medical staff throughout KZN: Over 800 staff on Wellness Packs; 47 staff on ARV's and Wellness Packs; 47 Diabetics being treated; 120 Cholesterol Patients seen monthly for treatment; 259 Hypertension Patients being treated monthly and 180 with skeletal/muscular ailments being attended to by the Chiropractor on a monthly basis.

- ? As the MEC for Transport, I am requesting all Management, officials and stakeholders to join together in this Wellness initiative. Let us all have a role to play. It is important that the staff utilises our clinics in order for us to know where we are in terms of our health. The Employee Health & Wellness initiative prides itself on giving employees the strictest confidentiality and anyone who goes against this oath will have to face legal consequences.

- ? In conclusion, Wellness is more than the absence of disease; it is the optimal health of body, mind and soul. Wellness comes with joy, vitality and balance. It gives us a sense of fully embodying our potential, the ability to face our responsibilities and challenges with grace, dignity and enthusiasm.

- ? The day will come when countries will not be judged by their military or economic strength or by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the well being of their people, their levels of health, nutrition and education in terms of health and wellness.

? Until that day the KZN Department of Transport is doing everything it can to ensure that all officials remain empowered.

I thank you