



Western Cape Department of Health NURSES UPDATE



Issue 1

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FOREWORD BY THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT PROFESSOR KC HOUSEHAM



We are faced by the challenge of shortages in nursing staff across the Department. Whilst this is an international problem, in the Western Cape, we must devise ways to retain the services of nurses in particular by ensuring the well being of those employed by the Department. It was heartening to hear the positive feedback about nurses in the Western Cape Department of Health when the Cecilia Makiwane Awards for Excellence were announced at a function on 24 October 2005. **Congratulations to all the nominees and the winner.** Nursing is a noble and caring service. Thanks to all of you in the Department who provide services to patients. It has been decided to dedicate an official quarterly newsletter to nursing issues. Through the newsletter you will be informed of the latest policy decisions and actions taken which affect you as a nurse within the Western Cape Department of Health. It will provide improved communication with nurses and in addition provide an opportunity for you to communicate with one another. I would thus encourage the active participation of all nurses in the Nurses Update!

Looking after our Nurses

Nurses are the backbone of any hospital, clinic and the Health Department.

The Health Department is aware and concerned that many nurses are either leaving the country or pursuing career opportunities in the private sector. The Department is trying to change this through some serious interventions.

Nursing issues are dealt with, in collaboration with the Nurse Managers Committee under leadership of Mrs Ray Arendse and Mrs Gadija Henkeman. Mrs Ray Arendse has been seconded to the Directorate Professional Support Services, led by Ms Vonita Thompson to deal with the Nursing issues in a focused and dedicated manner. The Department is dealing with the nursing issues in the following ways:

- The Chief Directorate: Human Resources has implemented a bursary system to students wanting to pursue nursing as a career since 2002. Currently 1552 bursaries were granted from the first to the fourth year students on a full-time and part-time basis.
- The Strategy of the Department with regard to Nurse training is to align training with the Department's Health priorities, e.g. Health

Care 2010 and with provincial priorities e.g. iKapa Elihlumayo i.t. Social Capital and Human Capital.

- Remuneration packages and conditions of service are currently under discussion at a national level.
- The Department is also improving the working environment for all.
- The Department has also introduced accelerated training for nurses by dedicated funding to increase capacity, improve equipment and upgrade of the institutional nursing schools (Groote Schuur, Tygerberg, Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre, Mowbray Maternity Hospital and Associated Psychiatric Hospitals – Stikland) and the outcome thereof will be evident in the next year and beyond.
- In view of the need identified by nurses and nursing students for mentorship, the Department embarked on a process to create and fill mentorship posts in key areas. Mentorship nursing posts were created and advertised for intensive care units and operating theatres in central hospitals, to promote the induction of newly appointed nurses and support training in general in these highly specialized units to improve the quality of care.

- Storekeeper posts are currently being filled in order to relieve nurses of administrative duties.

The Nursing Bill

The Nursing Act is currently under review with the publication of the new Nursing Bill. This is currently being brought before Parliament and should be finalized shortly.

Some new aspects being addressed in the Bill are the composition of the South African Nursing council, the revised Scope of Practice of all categories, the introduction of Community Service as well as Continuing Professional Development.

Profile of a Dedicated and Loyal

Sister Louise Mary Appolis commonly known to most as Sister Appolis, Facility Manager of Mitchell's Plain CHC has come a long way in the nursing field. In 1981, after completing her theory at the Nico Malan Nurses College, Sister Appolis did her internship at Groote Schuur Hospital. She remained at Groote Schuur until 1984 and then left for the Peninsula Maternity Hospital to do a Midwifery course. Upon completion of her Midwifery course she returned to Groote Schuur where she assisted in the Trauma Emergency Unit. Here she discovered her true passion. After being told she has a natural flair to work with people, Sister Appolis again left Groote Schuur Hospital and went to further her knowledge at Valkenberg Hospital where she did a one year Psychiatry course. Here she received a trophy for best practical nurse. In 1992 Sister Appolis went back to her roots and passion, Groote Schuur's Trauma Emergency Unit. She only stayed for a year after which she left for the private sector. After only 2 months in the private sector she realized that she loved and missed the daily community interaction. She returned to the public sector and was based at Mitchell's Plain Day Hospital when 24hr Trauma Units at Day Hospitals were introduced. In 1995 Sister Appolis was the first person in the Day Hospital environment to be afforded the opportunity to go complete a 1-year Diploma course in Trauma and Emergency Critical Care. After completing her course she returned to Mitchell's Plain CHC and in 1999 started her B-Tech degree at the Peninsula Technikon. In July 2004 Sister Appolis was appointed Facility Manager of Mitchell's Plain Community Health Centre. Here she received a Day Hospital A-

Category Merit Award and was nominated for the 2003 Cecelia Makiwani award. Sister Appolis feels that the support of her colleagues at Mitchell's Plain CHC is the major contributor to her success as a Facility Manager. She is a living example of a loyal nurse who thrived in the public service. VIVA SIS APOLLIS VIVA!

Nurses receive increase in uniform allowance

As from 1 April 2005 there has been an increase in the nurses uniform allowance. This information has been circulated and may be found in Circular H96/2005. There are specific criteria to follow when paying uniform allowance and this information is available from Circular H54/2005.

Provincial Cecilia Makiwane Award Ceremony

In 2004, at the National Cecilia Makiwane Award ceremony, the Western Cape walked away with the prized honor in Johannesburg. Nombekhaya Bambani, Chief Professional Nurse at Gugulethu Community Health Centre, was voted as the Provincial winner for her role in the HIV Clinic and mentoring Primary Health Clinic students in a poverty-stricken community. She represented the Western Cape Province at the National Award ceremony and once again did the province proud.

This year's (2005) event took place on 24 October 2005 at the Zevenwacht Estate. The nominees were Alec Nicholas Alexander, Patsy Collins, Rukea Abdroef, Dianne Powell, Roslyn Isaacs, Elizabeth Kennon, Sophia Matthews, Magdelene Southon, Victoria Malusi, Karel Roodman, Maureen Vermeulen, Roseline Adams and YHT Jacobs.

The **winner** was **Patsy Collins**, from the Mitchells Plain Community Health Centre and in the **second** place was **Diane Powell** from Groote Schuur Hospital and **third** place was **Magdelina Southon** from Macassar Community Health Centre.

Send your comments and suggestions to Ferial Soeker at the Communications Directorate on fsoeker@pqwc.gov.za or fax to 483 6169.