

13,135 nurses employed since Covid-19 outbreak

South Africa's nine provinces collectively employed 13,135 nurses during the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, prompting Health Minister, Dr Zweli Mkhize, to say this proves that it is "possible to achieve such numbers in such a short space of time".



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Speaking at the Society of Private Nurse Practitioners of SA conference, the minister said government is cautiously breathing a sigh of relief as the country continues to see a decline in detected cases, hospital admissions, deaths and excess deaths.

This as South Africa recorded 20 deaths on Sunday, the country's lowest one-day death toll since 23 May 2020.

So far, 649,793 people have contracted the disease since the outbreak in March. "Our recovery rate is now almost at 90% and our mortality rate has remained stable at around 2%," he said.

He said mothers affected by Covid-19 have given birth to healthy babies. "They are breastfeeding and physically bonding with their children, laying foundations for the wholesome upbringing and solid building blocks for a healthy and prosperous society."

Saluting nurses

Mkhize said these achievements have been possible because of the passion, dedication and sheer diligence of nurses and midwives. "We thank you for braving the threat of being infected yourself, and even of death."

To date, over 31,000 healthcare workers have contracted coronavirus, of which many of them are nurses and midwives, while 240 health practitioners succumbed to the disease.

Mkhize conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of those nurses who lost their lives.

Nursing Now campaign and roadmap

“In December last year, I had the privilege of launching the Nursing Now campaign, a three-year campaign initiated by the global nursing community with the sole objective of improving healthcare delivery to our people.”

The five key areas focus for this global campaign are ensuring that nurses and midwives have a more prominent voice in health policy-making; encouraging greater investment in the nursing workforce and recruiting more nurses into leadership positions.

It also involves conducting research that helps determine where nurses can have the greatest impact and sharing of best nursing practices

“Indeed, these key focus points align perfectly with the objectives of the Presidential Health Compact, The Quality Improvement Plan and, ultimately, the National Health Insurance.”

The minister said his department will soon publish the Strategic Direction for Nursing Education and Practice that outlines a roadmap for strengthening nursing and midwifery in South Africa for the next five years.

In addition, work has been done to promulgate and subsequently proclaim various sections of the Nursing Act, he added.

“I want to assure you that I share your aspirations of a better world through the work that we do to secure a healthy population for quality of life and prosperity for all.”

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