

SPEECH BY CLLR MPHOS PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, AT THE CHANGING DIABETES CYCLE RELAY ORGANISED BY NOVO NORDISK, 6 NOVEMBER 2014, RIVONIA

Novo Nordisk Representatives

MMCs

Senior Government Officials

The Health Fraternity

Ladies and gentlemen

I greet you all

As the representative of the City of Johannesburg I would like to thank Novo Nordisk, a global healthcare company now strongly represented in our country, for allowing us a platform to speak at this third annual event aimed at raising awareness of diabetes.

Ladies and gentlemen, diabetes is referred to as the silent killer for a very good reason: some of us are not aware that we carry this chronic disease, easily leading to untimely death if not identified and treated. It can damage the body's organs such as the kidneys and can easily lead to heart attack and stroke. The disease has claimed many thousands of lives worldwide over the years and about 6.5 million South Africans are living with diabetes today. This is a frightening number and campaigns like these, organised by Novo Nordisk, and taking place at an appropriate time before World Diabetes Day on the 14th of November, are aimed at ensuring that as South Africans we take this killer disease very seriously.

I am glad that, importantly, this campaign includes a wellness programme and awareness-raising. This will involve a group cycling as from today, departing from here at Novo Nordisk's headquarters to Soweto, Potchefstroom, Kimberly and right through to Cape Town. The 16 cyclists riding through our country will definitely make our citizens aware of the importance of physical fitness, an activity which is very important in keeping chronic diseases like diabetes at bay. We wish our 16 cyclists well as they spread the message against diabetes from town to town and through the rural areas until their final destination in Cape Town on the 8th of November.

Programme Director, we as the City of Johannesburg are deeply involved in the socio-economic and health activities of our citizens. We recognise that the physical, moral and spiritual aspects of society are closely linked. For example, the following City programmes are aimed at promoting healthy living amongst our citizens in order to fight diseases like diabetes:

**Street Fairs:** This includes fun walks, cycling, aerobics, health promotional activities and screening for conditions such as diabetes, which we are considering today, hypertension, HIV, and cervical and prostate cancer. The goal is to encourage people to adopt a healthy lifestyle by increasing exercise, promoting healthy eating practices, decreasing alcohol consumption and stopping smoking.

**Weight Loss Challenge:** This programme is to encourage communities to lose weight by establishing support groups, assisting in developing healthy eating plans, implementing exercise programmes and regular monitoring of weight. Support groups have been established to ensure sustainability of

the programme and to organise regular activities such as weekly weighing, fun walks and other promotional activities such as food preparation and health talks.

Health services: All primary health care facilities provide chronic disease services and the department plans to establish chronic disease support groups in at least 60% of wards. Through this programme, we are also targeting restaurants and other food outlets to encourage them to provide healthy meal options. We also conduct inspections to monitor compliance with public health by-laws.

In conclusion, I would like to urge all South Africans to support the work of Novo Nordisk and government in the fight against diabetes and in educating our society about this chronic disease.

Let us also support Novo Nordisk in its drive to raise funds for underprivileged children living with diabetes. In that regard we would like to thank our Health Division in the City of Johannesburg, the National Department of Health, Netcare, Virgin Active, Future Life and Chevrolet for partnering with Novo Nordisk in its battle against diabetes. We would also like to thank medical practitioners for raising funds for medication and for playing a meaningful role in educating and caring for children living with diabetes.

Lastly, let me say that this disease is not someone else's problem: it can affect any of us, and anybody in our families. Let us all - our families, ourselves, all of us - take a diabetes test, at least once a year, in order to ensure that we are free from this terrible disease, and to make it possible for appropriate treatment if we are unfortunate enough to be a diabetes sufferer. This will enable us to know where we stand with regard to the disease. Novo Nordisk has organised testing stations for us to do so. The company is making a real contribution to the wellbeing of South Africans.

Thank You