

The official opening of the Greenvillage Clinic

16 October 2008

Speech by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Amos Masondo, on the occasion of the official opening of the Greenvillage Clinic, Doornkop, Soweto – Johannesburg

Programme Director

MMC for Health: Clr Matshidiso Mfikoe

Members of the Mayoral Committee

Fellow Councillors

City Manager: Mr Mavela Dlamini

Managers and Officials of Council

Distinguished Guests

The Greater Soweto Community

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, let me begin by expressing appreciation for this opportunity to say a few words.

We are gathered here to celebrate the official opening of the Greenvillage Clinic, and to register government's commitment to deliver services to all.

I believe that health is developmental rather than a technical abstract question. Health issues are central to matters of development. An investment in health care is a critical contribution to human development.

Our country has been grappling with many health issues. Included amongst these is Tuberculosis, Malaria in certain parts of the country, periodic Cholera outbreaks and similar illnesses. In the past decade, HIV and AIDS has emerged as one of our critical challenges.

The delivery of primary health care is amongst the key strategic priorities and concern in the City of Johannesburg. We believe that the delivery of this service is in line with the City's policy of pushing back the frontiers of poverty.

Our health budget for the financial year 2008/2009 is R357 million. Once again the budget reflects our commitment to provide quality health services to our communities in collaboration with the other spheres of government. The City will be investing approximately R45 million towards HIV and AIDS prevention programmes.

Programme Director, let me emphasise that this City is determined to fight the battle against HIV/AIDS by optimally using the resources at our disposal. We will continue, as we always do to mobilise all sectors of the community wherever they may be found - be it in taxi ranks, in the streets or in communities to fight the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We need to deepen an understanding amongst the community about the preventative measures against HIV/AIDS, and to help dispel all kinds of myths and misperceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Greenvillage has a population of about 68 000. The levels of income in this area are to an extent reflected by informal settlements and RDP houses that one finds here. The

overarching problem of Greenvillage is therefore its self-evident poverty.

The government has a responsibility to help address the following key challenges:

- Unemployment;
- Health care and education, especially in the areas of HIV/Aids and TB;
- Environmental degradation;
- Housing; and
- Crime.

There can be no dispute that such adverse conditions give rise to many social problems. The health situation in this region tends to be characterised by illnesses such as TB, malnutrition, diarrhea, upper respiratory diseases, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) the spread of HIV/AIDS, diabetes and hypertension. Most of these diseases are poverty related.

The erstwhile Western Metro Local Council started providing mobile services to this area in 1994. A mobile van visited Greenvillage once a week to provide Immunisation and Family Planning services not far from this facility.

After the construction of Siphumlile Clinic in Doornkop in 1997, which was followed by the relocation of its Porta Cabin Clinic to this site. The mobile services were converted into a Satellite clinic and started rendering services twice a week.

The services rendered were also increased to include:

- Family Planning;
- Immunisation;
- TB services;
- Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections; and
- Minor ailments for the children under five (5) years of age.

Programme Director, we in the City of Johannesburg remain aware of the impact of migration on our infrastructure and we will continue to develop, expand it to meet the need.

Given the fact that this clinic had become too small, the City of Johannesburg allocated R3, 5 million to upgrade this facility.

It is important therefore to state that this clinic now continues to render the following services:

- TB treatment;
- Mother and Child Services including Immunisation;
- Comprehensive Ante Natal services;
- Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections;
- HIV/AIDS, Voluntary Counselling and Testing
- Comprehensive Primary Health Care services; and
- Reproductive health including family planning.

Programme Director, combating all of these diseases or minimising their impact is one of the City's key priority. This clinic will shorten the distances that patients have had to travel to receive health care. It will also ensure that we save costs and that only critical cases are attended to at hospitals and tertiary care institutions.

The City will continue to support efforts aimed at:

- Accelerating research on HIV/AIDS vaccines.
- And Through the work that is being done in the Johannesburg AIDS Council, we will be strengthening our relationship with various organisations of civil society and
- We will also enhance collaboration on various programmes targeting the youth.

Programme Director, with this facility, as with all others that we will be building in different parts of the City in the near future, we hope to improve the state of health of the citizens and ensure a healthy and productive population.

This facility has a staff compliment of 7 people. There is the Operational Manager, 3 Professional Nurses, 1 Admin Clerk and 2 General Workers.

The clinic operates for 5 days a week – Monday to Friday and from 07h30 to 16h00. Our future plan is to increase accessibility even further by introducing after hours services.

Programme Director, I would like to urge the staff at this clinic, in the spirit of Batho Pele – Putting People First, to do the following:

- to render a professional service to all patients and citizens
- to treat all people with respect and dignity at all times; and
- to make the facility attractive to all citizens.

I would also like to urge the community to ensure that this clinic is not vandalised. This facility belongs to you – the community. Please take care of it.

Programme Director, please allow me to conclude by congratulating MMC for Health, Clr Matshidiso Mfikoe, her senior management and the men and women in red and blue uniforms for bringing a world class primary health care facility to your doorstep.

Thank you