

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

# International Nurses Day



DENOSA

## Happy International Nurses Day

to all nurses: 12 May 2013



Dorothy Matebeni,  
DENOSA President.

Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA), with over 85 000 members, would like to wish all nurses in South Africa a happy International Nurses Day celebrations on the 12th of May.

*"Like anywhere else in the world, nursing in SA is faced with many challenges that continue to shake this noble profession. But the spirit of resilience similar to Florence Nightingale must remind nurses of the bigger challenges they face locally—the need to play a key role in fighting the burden of diseases"*

- Dorothy Matebeni, DENOSA President and veteran nurse.

Here is a schedule for provinces:

PROVINCE	DATE	VENUE	Guest and DENOSA national deployee	CONTACT PERSON
EASTERN CAPE	10 May	Ndlambe City Hall In Port Alfred	Cde David Makhombe (Deputy General Secretary); Executive Mayor of Ndlambe Municipality: Spho Tandani; Rev Ngangu	Koliswa Tota: 082 776 0983
WESTERN CAPE	11 May	George, Pine Lodge, George.	Cde Prof Olga Makhubela-Nkondo (First Deputy President)	Bongani Lose: 082 775 7739
NORTHERN CAPE	31 May	Tabernacle, Kimberly	MEC of Health: Mxolisi Sokatsha Cde David Makhombe (Deputy General Secretary)	Anthony Vassen: 082 450 9132
FREE STATE	10 May	Tumlang Primary school, Senekal	Cde Madithapo Masemola (Deputy General Secretary)	Veronica Fransman-Hendricks: 082 854 3684
KWAZULU NATAL	23 May	Ladysmith Sports Ground, Ladysmith	Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo: MEC of Health In KZN Cde Thandeka Malibi (Second Deputy President)	Cassim Lekhoathi: 082 821 1465
NORTH WEST	12 May	Naledi Municipality Hall, Vryburg	Cde Dorothy Matebeni (DENOSA President) MEC of Health: Dr Magome Masike. Mayor of Naledi Municipality: Mr ST Modisa.	Wayne Ntshabele: 079 879 2746
GAUTENG	12 May	Duduza Nigel Multipurpose Centre, Corner Mandela and Lekope Streets, Ekurhuleni	Cde Thembeka Gwagwa (General Secretary) Dr Gwen Ramokgopa: Deputy Minister of Health	Dlmakatao Sebopa: 082 449 7457
MPUMALANGA	14 May	Embuzini village in Inkomazi Region, with visit to Samora Machel Memorial site	Cde John Tladi (National Treasurer)	Silence Matsane: 082 776 0979
LIMPOPO	8 May	Jack Botes Hall in Polokwane	Cde Dorothy Matebeni (President). MEC of Health: Dr Norman Mabasa. HOD of Health in the province. Town Mayor of Polokwane: Freddie Greaver. Executive Mayor of Polokwane: Mr Mapoulo.	Kwena Manamele: 082 776 0971

Nurses united in pursuing service excellence

www.denosa.org.za

WITH SA still riddled by a burden of diseases while the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) deadline fast approaches, the International Nurses Day on 12 May couldn't be a better time to unite nurses' efforts towards closing the gap and meeting the health-related MDGs four, five and six.

Since 1974, nurses worldwide celebrate the 12th of May each year as the International Nurses Day, the birthday of Florence Nightingale who was considered the pioneer of modern nursing.

This year's theme chosen by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) is: "Closing The Gap: Millennium Development Goals 8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1". MDGs galvanise development effort to set global and national priorities and focus attention, action and resources. They take a holistic approach to reducing poverty

"But to succeed in reducing poverty requires that we tackle a range of other social issues such as education, women empowerment and environmental sustainability as they have a link to poverty," says President of the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) and a veteran nurse,

## Nurses' unity the gateway to tackling health-related MDGs



Dorothy Matebeni,  
(DENOSA)

Dorothy Matebeni.

"As the majority in health, nurses are at the forefront when it comes to implementing health policies that go towards meeting the goals.

"This is where the say 'nurses are the backbone of health' is more than a rhetoric. Uniting nurses and a collaborative effort in the country towards service excellence will make the goals within our reach," she says. Regarding health-related MDGs, the country's progress report for South Africa is a mixed bag of both successes and some challenges.

Goal Four, on reducing child mortality, South Africa's scorecard in the Country Report 2010 shows that the country is still battling to reduce the

high levels of child mortality. Despite the necessary policies that are in place to reduce it, child mortality rate is still far above the set target of 20 deaths per thousand live births.

Matebeni says collaborations such as public/private partnerships are key in addressing this challenge, including the partnership between DENOSA and the Society of Midwives of South Africa (SOMSA). Government's initiative to revitalise primary health care should also be recommended. On Goal five, to improve maternal health, the report shows the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is high, and the target is to attain MMR ratio of 38 deaths per 100 000 live births by year 2015.

The proportion of births attended to

by skilled health personnel is an important indicator of maternal health. The type of medical assistance provided during pregnancy has an impact on reproductive health.

There are institutions with a high number of non-midwives in maternity and at times labour wards. Raising this issue should not be viewed as inconsiderate to those who want to have experience in labour ward in order to pursue their career development. Goal Six, (combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases), the country has the largest Anti-Retroviral Therapy programme in the world, which may have contributed towards stabilising HIV prevalence.

Many nurses have been pivotal in this success through their participation in the nurse-initiated and managed anti-retroviral treatment (NIMART). As a result, United Nations Aids Programme's 2012 report indicated a considerable reduction of new infection rates.

"Meeting these goals will require a collective and collaborative effort from nurses," concludes Matebeni.

The date for the celebrations in SA can be obtained from the DENOSA Provincial offices.

## Nurse shortages still a thorny issue

budgeted for their placement in jobs. DENOSA believes this problem can be resolved easily, and calls for the intervention of the national department.

DENOSA says that in the Free State, for example, out of close to 350 nurses who completed their community service in 2012, no more than 49 of them were placed in health centres due to budget shortages. At Chris Hani Baragwanath hospital in Gauteng, the shortage of qualified midwives propels management to deploy maternity-section nurses who are not midwives, which DENOSA has been strongly opposed to. DENOSA finds these to be contradicting the minister of health's ambitious drive to improve health conditions of the majority citizens.

According to the nursing organisation, what com-

pounds the problem is that many nurses are close to retirement and it takes months to replace those that retire, which causes burnouts in the remaining staff as a result of the unbearable workload.

With a population of 50-million, South Africa has no more than 245 000 nurses, according to the register of the South African Nursing Council (SANC), which is a figure that may include people who are no longer practicing as nurses as well as those nurses who now ply their trade overseas. A sizeable percentage of this figure is also based in the private hospitals that only look after 16% of the population.

With the difficulty in getting a clearer picture on the true extent of the nurses shortage in the country, DENOSA embraces the recommendations as enshrined in the recently-launched Nursing Education, Training and Practice Strategy that SANC should revitalise its database to create a useful tool to strengthen the National Health Information System, which will help inform planning for nursing and midwifery services.

THE DENOSA national executive committee (NEC) recently noted with great concern the remaining status quo of nurse shortages in the country's health centres and the ineffective human resources budgetary management systems in resolving the problem as there are qualified nurses that are ready to start work tomorrow.

This follows the latest audit outcome on public health facilities released on the 20th of March, which painted a bleak picture on the state of public health service generally. DENOSA's concern is that, while acknowledging the 600 medical experts to be contracted by government and deployed in the country's mostly rural health centres in preparation for the NHI, this is a drop in the ocean given the huge shortage of nurses in South Africa.

What DENOSA finds as a lacking will to resolve nurse shortages at provincial departments is that a many students who have completed nursing and community service long ago are sitting at home, because most provincial departments have not planned and