

MEC Dieketseng Mashego Officially Launches Operation Bophelo Pele in Elias Motsoaledi Municipality

KGOBOKWANE, 13 September 2024 — The Limpopo Department of Health's MEC, Dieketseng Mashego, today officially launched Operation Bophelo Pele, a provincial campaign aimed at strengthening primary healthcare services in rural communities.

The launch, held at Kgobokwane Sports Ground in the Elias Motsoaledi Municipality, drew a large crowd of local residents, healthcare professionals, and government officials who came together to witness the unveiling of this transformative health initiative.

Operation Bophelo Pele (which translates to "Health First") is designed to enhance access to essential healthcare services, particularly in rural areas where healthcare infrastructure and resources are often limited.

The initiative prioritizes preventative healthcare, maternal and child health services, and chronic disease management. It also seeks to bring healthcare services closer to communities by deploying mobile clinics, conducting health screenings, and offering health education.

In her keynote address, MEC Mashego stressed the importance of improving primary healthcare in rural areas, where the burden of preventable diseases remains high. "Operation Bophelo Pele is about putting the health of our people first. This campaign is a call to action for all of us to work together to ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to accessing quality healthcare," said Mashego.

The MEC highlighted that the initiative is in response to the challenges faced by rural communities, where access to healthcare services is often hindered by distance, lack of resources, and the shortage of medical personnel. "In Limpopo, the majority of our population lives in rural areas. For too long, these communities have struggled with inadequate healthcare services. Through Operation Bophelo Pele, we are committed to ensuring that every resident has access to the services they need, right at their doorstep," she added.

As part of the event, health screenings were conducted for the local community, with services ranging from blood pressure checks, diabetes testing, HIV counseling and testing, and screenings for chronic conditions. A live demonstration of these services was held to showcase the type of care that will be made available through the campaign.

Operation Bophelo Pele will also focus on health education, encouraging individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles and take a proactive approach to their own

health. The campaign will address issues such as nutrition, physical activity, and the prevention of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and hypertension, which are prevalent in rural areas.

One of the key pillars of the campaign is maternal and child health. MEC Mashego noted that the Department is intensifying efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality by improving access to antenatal care, promoting immunizations, and offering family planning services. “We are committed to safeguarding the health of our mothers and children. With Operation Bophelo Pele, we will ensure that every pregnant woman and every child in Limpopo receives the care they deserve,” Mashego stated.

Residents of Kgobokwane expressed their gratitude for the initiative, with many acknowledging that access to quality healthcare has long been a challenge in the area. “We are encouraged to see such a commitment to our health. We are grateful to the MEC and her team for bringing these services to us,” said one community member.

Operation Bophelo Pele is set to roll out across the province, with mobile clinics and healthcare teams traveling to remote areas to provide on-the-ground services. The campaign will be continuously monitored and evaluated to ensure that it is meeting its objectives and improving the health outcomes of rural communities.

MEC Mashego concluded her speech by urging communities to take ownership of their health and work with the Department to achieve the goals of the campaign. “Together, we can build a healthier Limpopo. Let us all commit to putting our health first,” she said