



**Media Statement
11 December 2019**

For Immediate Release

Health Minister and Sefako Makgatho University Chancellor Designate Dr Zweli Mkhize congratulates the SMU Oral Health class of 2019 during their attestation ceremony

The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) held an attestation ceremony for the Oral health class of 2019 today 11 December 2019. Speaking at this ceremony, health minister and SMU Chancellor Designate Dr Zweli Mkhize reminded the young professionals that they have a responsibility to serve the nation and not themselves. “I want to remind you that in the African context, no child is the responsibility of one family, it is a community responsibility to nurture and raise children, therefore you are societal products and we expect you to go out and serve our communities”, said Minister Mkhize.

Minister Mkhize further said that oral health has to be properly integrated in particular at the level of primary health care to enable people to have access to oral health care services so that issues and problems are detected earlier including early diagnosis of cancerous growths.

He also urged all South Africans to embrace the concept of the National Health Insurance as the country moves towards the realization of the Universal Health Coverage, emphasizing that UHC is a must and it is critical for South Africa to embark on this journey.

“I want to encourage those who are taking an oath today to see themselves as being part of the extended NHI plan which will ensure that they participate at the primary and secondary health care levels and ensure the wellness of the people”, emphasised the minister.

“South Africa is amongst the top five countries that contribute to the 50 percent of the mortality of people in the continent, so it is important for us to reverse that and one way to be able to do that is to ensure that the amount we are able to spend on health is actually pulled together so that it benefits a larger number of people in the way that we have designed the NHI”, he said.

Over 65 students were affirmed by the University in the fields of oral hygiene, dental therapy and dental surgery and are ready to go out and serve communities.

The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University community worked hard to ensure that the academic programme is successfully concluded following a protracted strike earlier.

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