

PHARMACIST ASSISTANTS TO HELP ALLEVIATE SHORTAGE

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PROUD: Left, Health MEC Fezi Ngubentombi, with graduate Boitumelo Maine and Mojo Mokoena, SA Pharmacy Council. Picture: Neo Mvubu

In an effort to deal with the shortage of pharmacists in the province, the department of health graduated 75 pharmacist assistants at the Bram Fischer building in Bloemfontein.

The lack of medical practitioners in the Free State has become a problem with rural communities feeling the brunt of shortage of staff in impoverished communities.

As a result, the MEC of health Fezi Ngubentombi told guests at the awards ceremony of their plan to fulfil the resolutions taken during the health summit held in 2009 with Premier Ace Magashule in attendance, to train health professionals.

Ngubentombi said that there had been a gap in terms of qualified pharmacists in the province. She said while the problem was not only confined to the Free State but a nationwide problem, it was important to do something about it in the province.

She said that the pharmacist assistants would help widen the scope of service delivery in towns where there is a major shortage.

“The students have been offered employment in hospitals and health care centres in the province and we wanted to make sure that no pharmacist remains unemployed,” she said.

The graduates were trained by Buys Training and Development Academy for a period of two years.

Pharmaceutical training manager Sanet Schoon said there was a great need for pharmaceutical assistants in the province and as a result the department of health decided to carry out the training programme.

Schoon said that pharmacists were needed in healthcare centres and hospitals around major parts of the province, especially in impoverished communities where the service was severely needed.

Senior manager of pharmacy practice at the SA Pharmacy Council Mojo Mokoena applauded the leadership of the pharmaceutical services from the province.

Mokoena said there was room for development in the field of pharmaceuticals and the graduates are able to study further and become pharmacists themselves.

“The sky is not the limit, there is no reason that prevents you from furthering your studies. The opportunities are limitless,” she said.

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