

## **ANOTHER PROFESSION IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

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Photos by Lt Sello Segone, A/Editor Milmed Magazine

The first class of Bachelor in Clinical Medical Practice (BCMP) professionally known as Clinical Associates graduated on 08 December 2011 at University of Pretoria (UP). The declaration ceremony was attended by the Gauteng MEC of Health and Social Development, Ntombi Mekgwe who delivered the Health Minister's speech, Dr Aron Motsoaledi. Brig Gen Euginia Moremi who represented the Surgeon General, Lt Gen Veejaynad Ramlakan with other senior officers of the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) and the University professionals attended the ceremony.

After a decision was taken at the National Health Council in December 2002, the Clinical Associates programme was officially launched in 2008 with an intake of only 23 students at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) in Mthatha in Eastern Cape. "The launch of this crucial and progressive programme tells a story about our commitment to the rights of our people...." the late Minister of Health Dr Manto Tshabalala – Msimang said on the official launch of the programme in 2008. The citizens of South Africa have a right to health hence it was aimed at producing mid-level health workers to improve the country's health system.

The first group of this cadre of health workers graduated in April at WSU which was the first university to offer BCMP in South Africa. Since its launch, every year students from all different walks of life in the country including the members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) have been accepted to study towards BCMP. Currently, WSU, University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and UP are offering BCMP.

Both the MEC and Brig Gen Moremi agreed that these young healthcare workers are the pioneers of Clinical Associates and further warned that they have a "challenge to uphold high standards" as they are the ambassadors of this new profession in the health system.

The South African government, specifically the health department, the SAMHS and the medical schools all worked together in shaping and skilling these young people who graduated. Prof Eric Buch, the Dean Faculty of Health Sciences at UP said "We are confident about the skills they acquired that will help our health department in our country".

Recognising the good work of the graduates and university personnel, Prof Buch said, "High pass-rate is the product of passion for teaching and learning". Brig Gen Moremi called the excited graduates "the trend setters of the Clinical Associates". There were 44 graduates of the BCMP of which 12 were military members and 32 were non-military members



**Gauteng MEC Health and Social Development,  
Ms Ntombi Mekgwe**

## 12 Uniformed Members

Candidate Officers (COs) Nthabeleng Chabangu, Delphin Hlatshwayo, Ntswaki Kgosimere, Johanna Maake, Mamaleka Mabogwane, Sophia Nel, Bianca Persent, Lena Seemise, Nthabiseng Seshoka, Mamello Mahloko, Matsabana Lebese, Selokela Mathumo.



CO Nthabiseng Seshoka: signing of declaration



Above: Brig Gen Euginia Moremi handing over an award to CO Diana Nel for the Best Academic Performance over three years



Above: Brig Gen Euginia Moremi presenting an award to CO Ntswaki Kgosimere for outstanding academic and professional performance over three years

## 32 Non military members

Diale Tiny, Dlamini Michael, Dube Kopano, Jele Thubelihle, Jongile Sindiswa, Kekana William, Leballo Edwin, Maphumulo Thulakoni, Mapukata Charlene, Maruma Sinah, Mashabela Katlego, Mathebula Delisile, Mathebula Nompumelelo, Mbatha Cebisile, Molema Baitshapi, Moloji Mafusi, Morailane Tebogo, Morero Fanyana, Moseki Bakang, Mpangane Chacklas, Msibi Lerothodi, Ngcobo Sanele, Ngwenya Portia, Nhlabathi Nelly, Ntsimane

Rebaone, Ntuli Mthandeni, Papa Litha, Sethlapelo Arthur, Sethlare Masheke, Tembe Sabelo, Lepele Makoa, Malaza Mdlaka

### 5 Award Winners

**CO Ntswaki Kgosisimere** was awarded the Department of Family Medicine prize for outstanding academic and professional performance over the three years, **Mpangane Chacklas** awarded Bookmark prize for the most inspirational student, **Ngcobo Sanele** received the School of Medicine prize for the best academic performance in the final year of the course, **Sethlapelo Arthur** received the Bookmark prize for the student who demonstrated the best leadership qualities, **CO Sophia Nel** awarded the ABSA prize for the best academic performance over the three years of the course.

Upon receiving their degrees and entry into the Clinical Associate Profession, graduates declare solemnly:



The new graduates taking a pledge

*“I will continue the age old tradition of healthcare and of service to humankind*

*I will respect human life*

*I will practice my profession faithfully and honourably and with professionalism*

*I will respect all members of the healthcare team and together strive to maintain high professional standards*

*I will maintain and protect patient*

*confidentiality and in all cases will conduct myself in an ethical and professional way towards my patients*

*I will continue the high standard of training received from my University through life-long learning to remain a competent practitioner.”*

The aim of this cadre of healthcare workers is to bridge the gap between the doctors and nurses, especially in the rural areas where it widens most. The MEC mentioned that these young people will be sent back to their provinces of origin to assist in improving the health system in the country. Prof Buch extended gratitude to all the bodies that supported these graduates.