

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR, CLR M MAPHETLE AT
THE HEALTH RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME OF TLOKWE
MUNICIPALITY**

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Programme Director, I really feel privileged to be accorded the honour of addressing the personnel of this City Council on so important matters of health. I say this is an important matter because the health of this institution largely depends on the health of its personnel.

I would like to start forthwith by commending the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for the sterling work they are doing in reminding us all from time o time how important it is that we have to look after our health. This Programme serves a vital function that management, always on a high drive to achieve and deliver, often neglects the very health that we all need in order to work to our highest peak so as to deliver the best to our communities.

There are so many of us that are ignorant of our health status. We regularly service almost every imaginable property we have, from maintaining our houses to servicing our cars, but we hardly take time to regularly check our health status unless when we really become sick, often by then our bodies and minds may have been beaten to a pulp! It does not have to be this way. We need to start developing a healthy lifestyle and inculcate the same to our children, encouraging them to cultivate such a habit.

Programme Director, I am also excited on the potential of this Health Risk Management Programme that the City Council have embarked on. Many people, and I am sure even within this Council are saturated by a proliferation of marketing claims on what they can offer by way of remedies.

Just to mention a few of what most people may normally are dying to know about from health service providers and what they instead are exposed to from marketers will show you how important this Programme is. For instance:

- Health consumers need accurate information and data concerning the success of the program, including data on: average weight-loss of total client population; long-term success rates (rates of recidivism and maintenance).

But marketing and sales pitch about how easy it is to lose weight and keep it off, but they are offered no data to substantiate these claims. There may be a few testimonials by several people who have lost a great

deal of weight (30, 40, and even 50 pounds), but no information on average weight loss or long-term maintenance of weight.

- Consumers need clear and honest information concerning costs of the program. This should include membership fees, start-up costs, and any additional costs such as food purchases, meal plans, medications, audio/video tapes, or other products.

Yet a there is often a lot of talk around the subject of costs and fees but no detailed list of charges. While alluding to membership fees or other start-up costs, there are no actual rand amounts given.

- Consumers need professional supervision from trained physicians and nurses, and counseling from other trained professionals such as dieticians, nutritionists, and physical fitness trainers.

Yet they often get little or no mention of any medical supervision.

- Consumers need clear and accurate information regarding health and safety risks of diet and exercise programs, particularly for people with pre-existing conditions such as heart disease, liver and kidney problems, and diabetes.

Yet often they get little, if any information on health and safety risks. There is usually some mention about safe weight loss (1-2 pounds per week or 1% of total body mass per week), but that is the extent of it.

Now I belief the Health Risk Management Programme that Council has embarked on is different and is bound to deliver on its claims. The programme is not a generalized hit and miss in the dark. It is rather based on based on tests conducted to individual employees and their consequent health profiles. It is therefore customized to specific health needs.

I therefore have no doubt in my mind that this initiative is bound to succeed. However, a fair amount of self exertion and commitment is equally going to be required from the participants themselves. It is two way situation. Only if participants commit themselves through body, soul and mind (excuse the pun) can they reap the benefits of the programme.

In the final analysis therefore, Programme Director, allow me to congratulate and commend every participant to the programme. They have started a long, hard but interesting journey to a healthy lifestyle. Believe me, once you have started you cannot stop.

You are becoming addicted to health. Enjoy it nd good luck!