



**READ
INSIDE**

DREAM BIG

A silhouette of a person standing on a cliff with their arms raised in a 'V' shape, set against a sunset sky with orange and purple hues. The person is positioned between the words 'DREAM' and 'BIG'.

- The dream of an NWU medical school
- What will be the purpose of the NWU Medical School?
- Readiness of the clinical training platform in North West
- The NWU's "platinum" medical graduates
- Acceleration in the milestones reached to date

THE DREAM OF AN NWU MEDICAL SCHOOL

The dream of establishing a medical school at the North-West University (NWU) to produce medical graduates is slowly becoming a reality. Introducing a medical graduate course at the University is complicated and complex. The curriculum delivery involves theoretical training and clinical bedside training in the NWU and the North West Provincial Department of Health (NWPDOH). The University and the NWPDOH have to appoint academic staff for the medical faculty. In brief, the NWU will be responsible for the academic training platform and the NWPDOH for the clinical training platform.

Even though the health facilities in each district of the entire North West are available to be developed as clinical training sites, the clinical health facilities in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District are optimally positioned as clinical training sites for the first phase of the medical school project. A phased approach to developing the NWU Medical School is necessary because the infrastructure and human resources, especially the scarce skills of medical specialists and registrars, must be adequate to provide clinical training without compromising health service delivery and vice versa.

This first three years of the NWU's clinical training platform will include the Potchefstroom Regional Hospital, Ventersdorp Hospital/CHC and selected clinics and communities in the JB Marks sub-district.

The last three years of core clinical training will pivot around the Klerksdorp/Tshepong Hospital Complex, a tertiary hospital. Over the past 20 years, the Klerksdorp/Tshepong Complex has been introducing various tertiary services and also expanding its Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPSCA)-accredited academic footprint in medical school training by introducing various specialist (registrar) training programmes and the MBChB programme under the University of Witwatersrand. This has significantly improved the medical and academic staff establishment in the Klerksdorp/Tshepong Hospital Complex.

This current health professional clinical training capacity is a significant strength in introducing the MBChB programme under the NWU.

What will be the purpose of the NWU Medical School?

The NWU Medical School represents more than the provision of medical graduates of quality for the health workforce. It symbolises the NWU's responsiveness to the health needs of North West and the country and continent at large and the ambition to develop the most extensive and complex programme ever presented by this higher education institution.

The purpose will be to enable and develop community-orientated health professional students and graduates to achieve the highest personal and professional development necessary to comprehensively and expertly attend to the health needs of their communities.

South Africa faces a critical shortage of medical doctors (Clarke, 2022). North West has the lowest doctor-per-capita ratio of all South Africa's provinces. There are only about 0,21 doctors per 1 000 people (in public and private health systems), compared to the national doctor-to-population ratio of 0,37 per 1 000 of the population. At the current production rate, for South Africa to achieve an equivalent number of doctors to BRICS partner countries and other emergent economies with similar socio-economic standings, will take at least thirty (30) years.

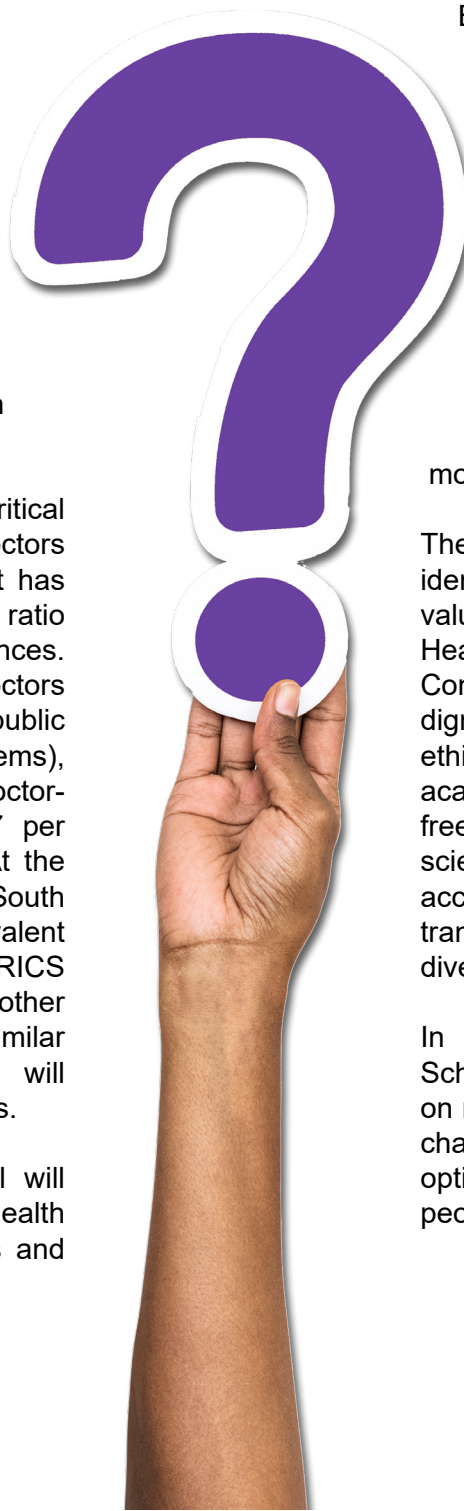
The NWU Medical School will align with the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) principles and

aim for a sufficient and appropriate health workforce (Department of Health, 2020). The South African 2020 Human Resources for Health (HRH) Strategy for 2030 outlines the need to increase the number of health professionals produced to meet South Africa's health requirements.

By producing graduates with essential and trustworthy professional attributes and skills, the NWU Medical School will respond to the HRH needs as well as to the disease profile of the province and South Africa's quadruple disease burden (HIV, TB, noncommunicable diseases, mother and child morbidity and trauma).

The NWU Medical School identifies with the foundational values of the NWU's Faculty of Health Sciences, based on our Constitutional values of human dignity, equality and freedom: ethics in all endeavours; academic integrity; academic freedom and freedom of scientific research; responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency; and embracing diversity.

In short, the NWU Medical School will have a solution focus on relevant South African health challenges and contribute to the optimal quality of life of all the people in South Africa.



Readiness of the clinical training platform in North West

The NWPDOH has a well-established clinical training platform consisting of 19 public hospitals, 304 primary healthcare clinics and community health centres.

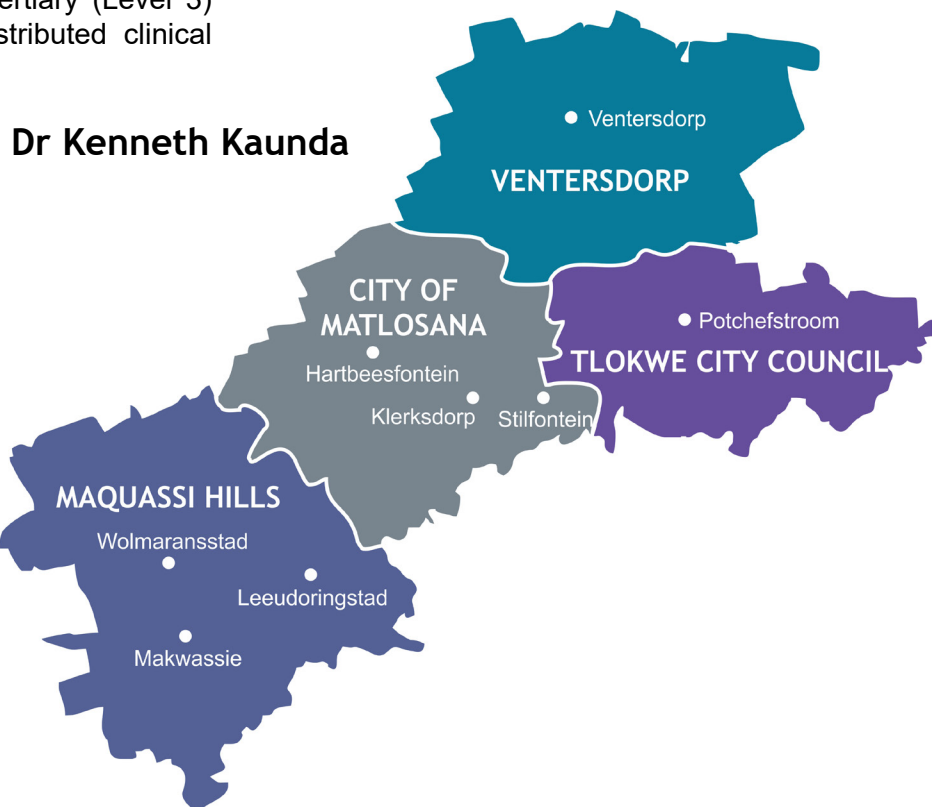
The entire North West, ranging from households with community health workers (CHWs) to clinics, district (Level 1), regional or provincial (Level 2) and tertiary (Level 3) hospitals, constitutes the distributed clinical training platform.

The NWU Medical School will develop in phases, starting with training in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. The district has a population of 772 320 people distributed in three local municipalities, namely Matlosana (56,2%), JB Marks (32,8%) and Maquassi Hills (11,0%). Some details of the facilities in the clinical training platform include the Level 3 hospital Klerksdorp/Tshepong Hospital Complex, with

904 beds, delivering 18 specialised disciplines; and the Level 2 hospital (Potchefstroom Regional Hospital) with 335 beds and delivering nine specialised disciplines. The Level 1 Nic Bodenstein Hospital has 100 beds, rendering general medical services, and primary healthcare services are delivered at 32 primary healthcare clinics and 10 community health centres.

Within the district, established community-based health services are delivered to homes by ward-based outreach teams consisting of professional nurses and community health workers. These are complemented by district-based clinical specialist teams with the emphasis on disease prevention, health promotion and community participation.

This clinical training platform is ready to deliver competency-based training towards a recognised qualification customised to our North West province.





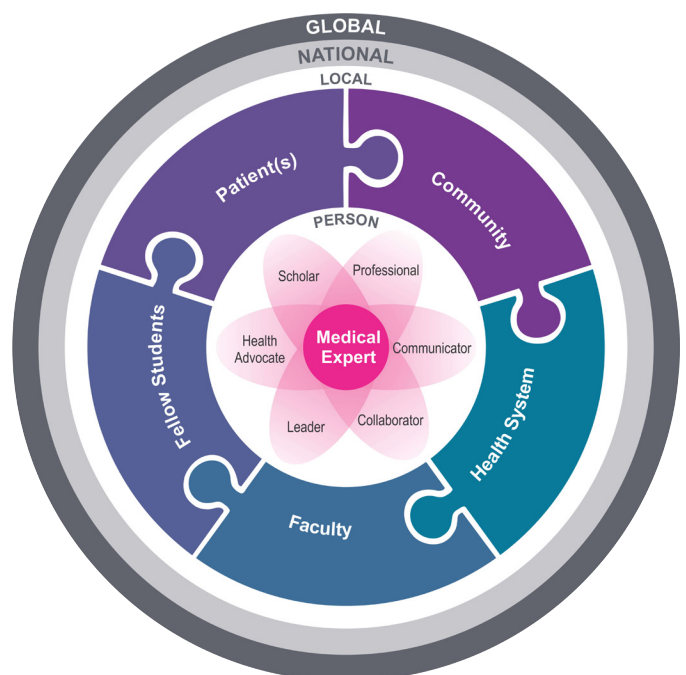
The NWU’s “platinum” medical graduates

North West produces more than 90% of South Africa’s platinum and is the most significant contributor of this metal to the global market. Platinum (Pt) is a precious metal that is also a highly functional catalyst in multiple products, and it is non-corrosive and oxidation free. This is, of course, obtained only through a rigorous refinement process. Platinum is an analogy of how the proposed NWU Medical School and the medical graduates bring excellence to North West and South Africa.


The NWU’s medical graduate will be a “platinum” medical graduate, a clinically competent generalist practitioner who uses modern technology, is a socially conscious, community-oriented individual, an ethical team player, and a resilient critical thinker.

True to this analogy, the NWU Medical School will see both school leavers and graduates entering an intensive training process. After three years of preclinical and three years of clinical teaching and training, medical graduates will exit the NWU Medical School with resilience, as competent generalists, as digital natives and as ethical and critical thinkers. These “platinum” medical graduates will strengthen the health system in North West.

The NWU Medical School’s expert review group developed the diagram below depicting the NWU medical graduate’s characteristics, which could even be likened to the atomic structure of a “platinum” graduate. This diagram is linked closely to the Lancet Commission’s (2010) recommendations for health professions education and CanMeds Framework (2023).



Acceleration in the milestones reached to date



By the end of September 2022, the NWU's Medical School technical task team had completed benchmarking visits to the medical schools of Stellenbosch University and the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) – the newest medical school in South Africa. These visits assisted the technical task team in obtaining strategic funding from the NWU to prepare for the permissions process.

On 14 December 2022, the executive management of the NWU (chancellor, vice-chancellor, chair of Council, registrar, executive dean) met with the National Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla. During this meeting, the Minister of Health proposed that the NWU Medical School should first be established in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda (DKK) District and on the Potchefstroom Campus and can, once established, expand to the other North West provincial health districts, namely the Ngaka Modiri Molema, Bojanala and Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompoti districts. The Honourable Minister also recommended starting with a small group of students (50 students for the first enrolment) and gradually increasing these enrolment numbers as the NWU Medical School stabilises and once the HPCSA accredits the NWU for a larger enrolment cohort. The Minister of Health requested that Prof Binu Luke conduct a gap analysis to establish the actual and identified shortages within the DKK health facilities.

By March 2023, the gap analysis had been completed, and the technical task team had conducted courtesy visits to the deanery of

the Wits, Pretoria and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University medical schools to give feedback on the progress in the technical work for the NWU Medical School and to activate discussions on joint clinical training governance. By the end of March, an expert reference group and senior curriculum specialists from the NWU had joined the technical task team to activate the process of designing the ideal NWU medical graduate.

By April 2023, a joint position paper had been signed between the NWU (Council chairperson and vice-chancellor) and the North West Provincial Government (Premier and MEC for Health), confirming that the NWU Medical School will be a joint venture. A joint presentation has been developed for the NWU and the NWPDOH to present the NWU Medical School project to Dr Percy Mahlathi, the Deputy Director General of the National Department of Health. While the NWU Medical School still awaited formal approval from the National Minister of Health, a curriculum development team was proposed, and curriculum development processes were conducted in the second semester of 2023.

Since September 2023, this technical task team's work to support the permissions for

the NWU Medical School has established five different workstreams:

1. Preparing the clinical training platform in North West.
2. Designing the graduate attributes of the NWU medical graduate.
3. Negotiations and consultations to establish a governance model between the NWU, the NWPDOH and other medical schools also functioning in our province (SMU, UP and Wits).
4. The financial management of the NWU Medical School, also including infrastructure and human resources.
5. Development of the curriculum.

All these workstreams require continuous collaboration between various stakeholders, including the NWU, the provincial government, the Department of Health, private industry and various experts. On 23 November 2023 the NWU Medical School Task Team presented the proposed business case to the National Department of Health and on 22 December 2023, the Minister of Health, honorable Dr MJ Phaahla, gave written permission for the NWU to progress with the Medical School project.

