

## 200 ambulances for all provinces

Southern Eye By Brent Shamu and Kenneth Nyangani

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*The initiative, which is running under the Presidential Emergency Medical Scheme, is expected to alleviate the health sector deterioration plaguing the country.*

THE government, in partnership with Discovery Ambulance Services, has commenced a free medical service rollout, with at least 200 ambulances expected to be disbursed to health facilities across all the country's 10 provinces.

The initiative, which is running under the Presidential Emergency Medical Scheme, is expected to alleviate the health sector deterioration plaguing the country.

Addressing beneficiaries during a community outreach programme in Epworth at the weekend, Health and Child Care minister Douglas Mombeshora confirmed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the government and Discovery Ambulances Services.

"This is a very good complementary activity that you are witnessing today. We are expecting a huge fleet of ambulances to complement our existing ambulances in the Ministry of Health. So far, we are looking to start with about 200 ambulances," he said.

Mombeshora encouraged stakeholders to partner the government to assist the impoverished health system.

"We encourage other private players to come in and complement the Ministry of Health in its quest to provide access to health services throughout the country," he said.

Discovery Ambulance Services founder and chief executive officer, David Munowenyu, said the initiative would cater to the less privileged in a bid to ensure inclusive medical care for everyone.

The initiative also includes training, treatment and screening free of charge.

“The Ministry of Health and Discovery Ambulance Services have come to cover the gap for such things, to say we are there to bridge that gap. If you are sick and don’t have the money to undergo a certain operation, we are coming in as the Presidential Emergency Medical Scheme.

“The training empowers them to provide better care while allowing them to share responsibilities, so that they can work and sustain their families,” Munowenyu said.

Zanu PF Harare province chairperson Godwills Masimirembwa commended the initiative’s universal approach and confirmed that adults and youths were being trained in first aid response to improve access to medical services.

“The Presidential Emergency Medical Scheme is a testament that everyone has access to medical services. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that our communities are prepared, informed and equipped to respond to medical emergencies,” he said.

“This programme is a crucial step and reaffirms the collaboration between our government and the private sector as we build our nation towards an upper-middle-income economy by 2030.

“We have ambulances and emergency units in which children and adults are being trained to deal with emergencies at the household level. So, if a person collapses, a person has a medical emergency, you know that within the community there are people who have been trained through these outreach programmes.”

Meanwhile, under the Presidential Emergency Medical Scheme, over 10 000 people of different demographics have been trained in basic first aid responses.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/200043879/200-ambulances-for-all-provinces>

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