

## Nomination for RuReSA Award 2016

Nominee: Lineo Lecheko

Place of work: Zithulele Hospital

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Most rural communities dream of having passionate, dedicated rehabilitation professionals who develop and deliver high quality services to them despite their remote locations. The community who live around Zithulele Hospital are fortunate to have such a person in Lineo Lecheko, an audiologist.

Dineo (as she is called) graduated from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and then went on to do her community service year in Mthatha. Continuing to work rurally, she joined Frontier Hospital in Queenstown after completing her community service year. During 2010 she visited Zithulele Hospital with an outreach called Hear Now South Africa. This was the first time an Audiologist had been to Zithulele. In 2013 she returned to join the Zithulele Hospital Clinical Team and is still making a significant contribution to the community and the team she works with.

Last year Dineo was fortunate enough to have a community service Audiologist join her “one woman team” for the first time. Pamela Ntutuka shares her experience of working with Dineo:

*For the year that I worked with Dineo at Zithulele Hospital I was in awe at her skills and the manner in which she treats her patients. She is extremely hard working, motivated, goal driven and passionate about her profession. Running a department can be strenuous and overwhelming but there is never a challenge too big for Dineo and she always give her very best to every patient that she sees. I value how she always goes the extra mile to ensure that the patients of Zithulele are satisfied with audiological services and are receiving effective management.*

Dr Ben Gaunt, the clinical manager at Zithulele Hospital, further echoes Dineo’s commitment to her patients, describing her as an excellent team player, reliable (an essential trait when building a new service) and an incredible asset to the community. *“She has largely set up and runs what is practically a gold-standard audiology service despite our extremely rural location,”* he says.

When Dineo arrived at Zithulele the services were still in the early development phase and the department had not been able to procure much equipment. Hearing aids were, at that stage, only accessed via Mthatha.

Three and a half years later, the picture is very different! (see attached pictures)

Dineo’s drive and commitment to improve the Audiology service caught the attention of the provincial Treasury, who helped directly to fund equipment worth more than 1 million rand. The department now boasts a state of the art booth, OAE, Tympanometer, ABR and a Kuduwave mobile machine.

This has given the service the ability to screen newborns, provide clinic outreach services, school outreach services and provide hearing aid fittings at Zithulele hospital. Ben Gaunt explains how she *“has been a critical partner in their MDR TB programme and this has led to the hospital having one of the most reliable screening programmes and generally excellent audiology outcomes.”* Dineo has decided to document this work and is currently doing her Masters on this topic.

Above all, it is Dineo’s heart for her work and the people she serves that makes her a fitting candidate for the RuReSA Award this year. As her colleague Pamela put it:

*“She has impacted the clinical team and majority of the patients positively. I remember last year most patients who had been fitted with hearing aids by Dineo a long time ago would walk to the hospital from as*

*far as Jalamba or Nzulwini every time after harvesting season and give her something from their gardens to show how grateful and appreciative they are for the services she offered and the respect she shows to patients. Hearing aid fittings give her particular pride and joy. She always used to say that "making someone hear again and seeing how happy they are when they are connecting to the hearing world again is her greatest achievement and it gives her great satisfaction with her work "*

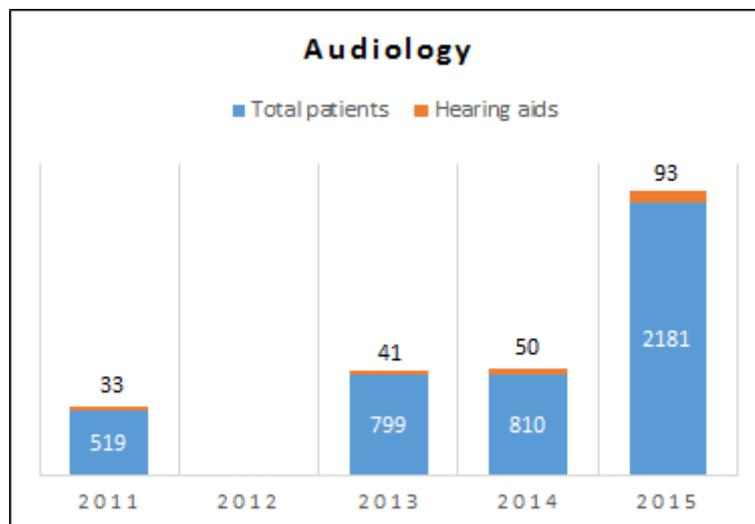
Dineo is the epitome of a rural audiologist. Having spent her early childhood in a rural area, she is well acquainted with the needs of rural communities. She has not forgotten that and has chosen to use her considerable skills and passion for the benefit of others. In so doing, she is uplifting the quality of life of many, and inspiring other clinical professionals to follow her lead.

I hope you will strongly consider this nomination. Dineo would be a worthy recipient of the 2016 RuReSA award.

Regards

Shannon Morgan  
Project Coordinator: Rural Ability Programme  
Jabulani Rural Health Foundation  
RuReSA Exco member

#### **Statistics: Audiology services Zithulele Hospital**

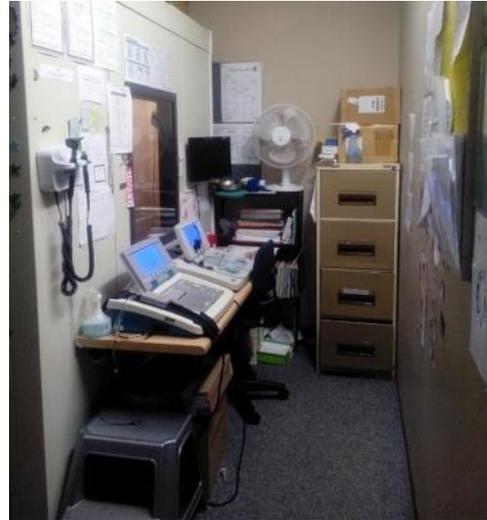


*One can see how the number of people accessing the service has increased dramatically in the time Dineo has been at Zithulele hospital. It is however unfortunate that, for HR reasons, she wasn't able to retain the Community service audiologist she had working with her in 2015 and who wanted to stay.*

How the service has grown and changed!



The Audiology Department **THEN**



The Audiology Department **NOW**

