

Faculty of Health Sciences **Rural Community Initiative**

Mobile Health Service

In collaboration with the Free State Department of Health (FSDoH) and three regional Agricultural unions, the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), University of the Free State (UFS) launched a mobile health service specifically for farming communities in the Kopanong Local Municipality, Xhariep District Municipality. The initiative forms part of the faculty's teaching and learning platform in Kopanong, where students are placed for weekly rotation at least 36 weeks of the year. It is also an extension of the scholarship of engagement as proposed in the Integrated Transformation Plan, and Town and Gown programme of the UFS.

The Faculty of Health Science has created a mobile healthcare service that aims to

- Provide an innovative mobile health service for farming communities
- Cultivate an inclusive teaching and learning platform for healthcare providers.
- Equip healthcare providers with essential competencies for refuturing rural healthcare.
- Engage in community based research.

Mobile clinic route

The mobile clinic provides health service around the towns of Trompsburg, Springfontein and Philippolis on a weekly rotation visiting each areas once a month. The vehicle will spent the entire day at the specific site- five sites per week (figure 1A-C). Farmers receive a schedule of where the vehicle will be; farmers from the surrounding farms transport community members from their farms to the site. The mobile service route around the three towns is shown in figure 1A-C.

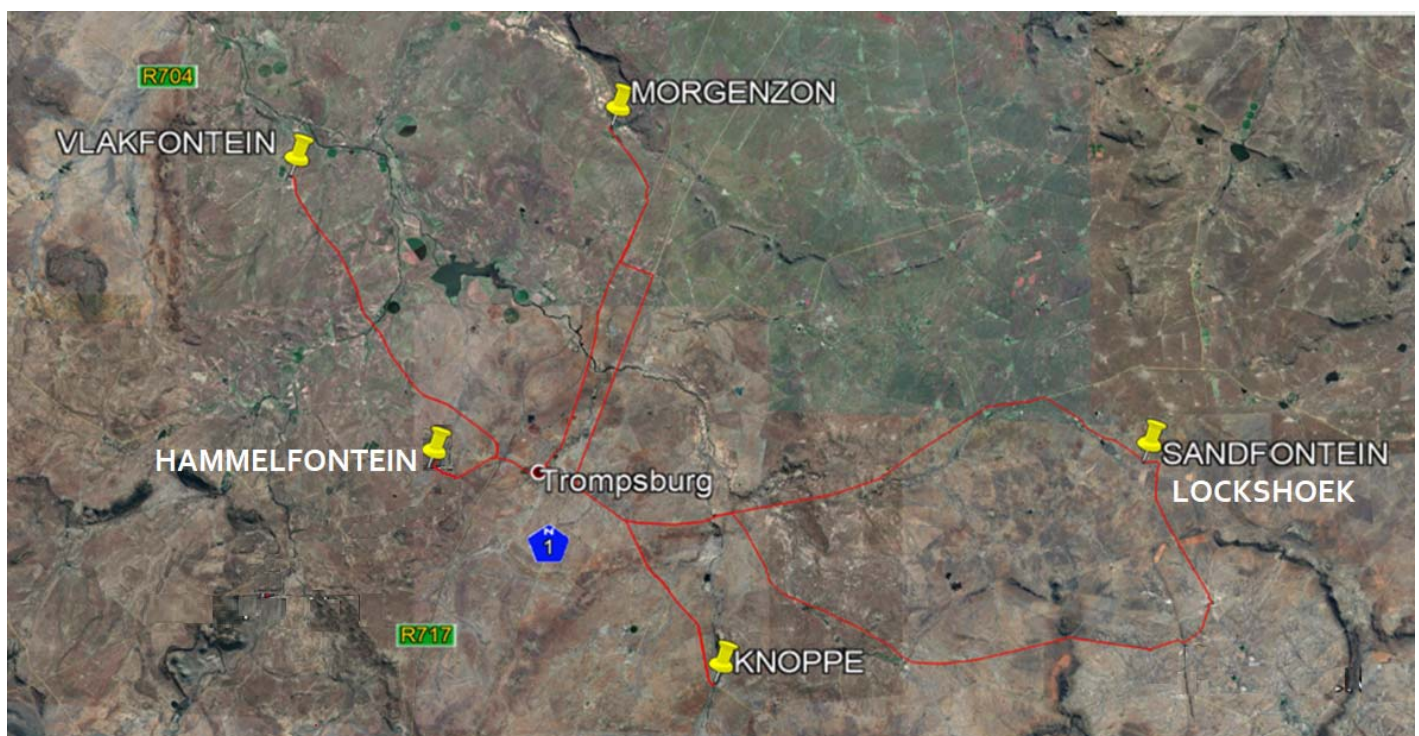


Figure 1A Shows the farms around Trompsburg identified as daily sites



Figure 1B Shows the farms around Springfontein identified as daily sites

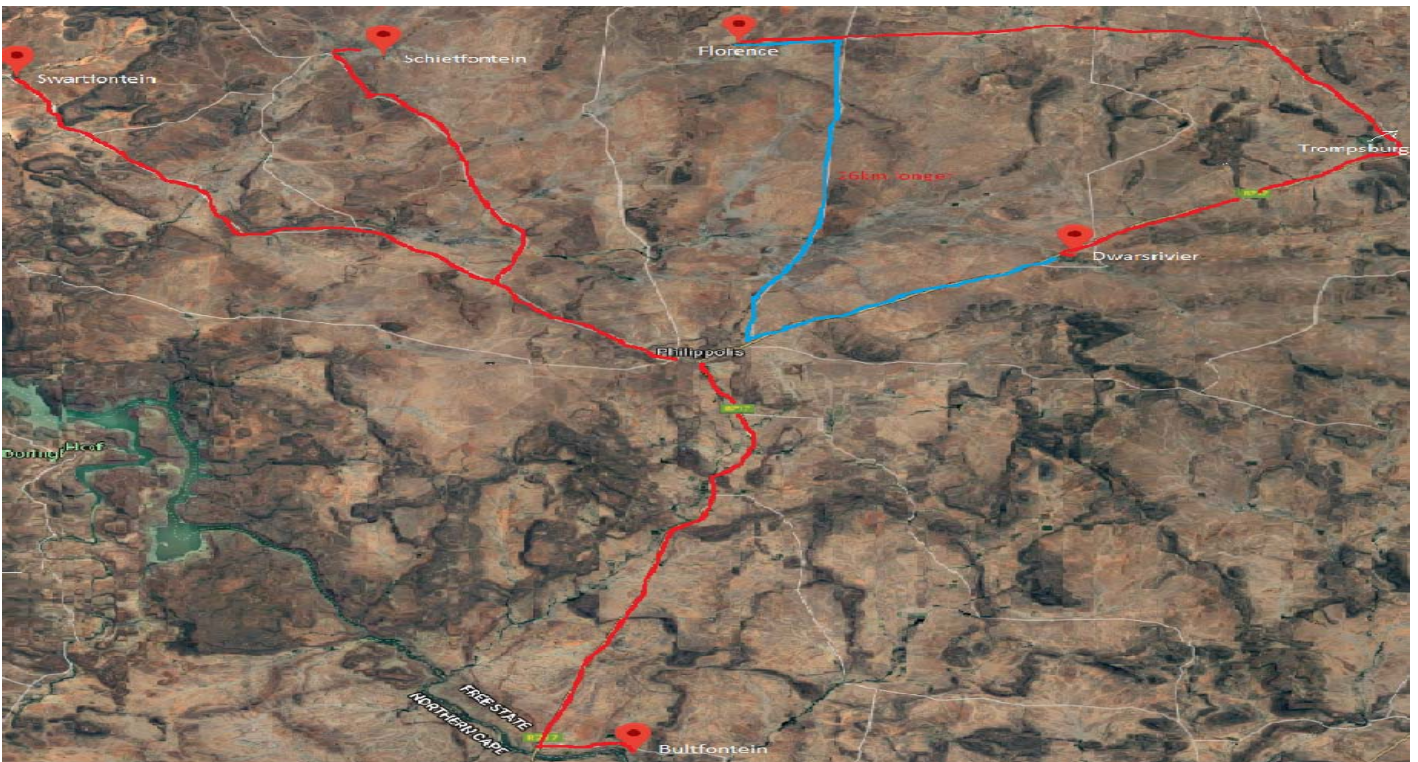


Figure 1C Shows the farms around Philippolis identified as daily sites

As this service is offered in collaboration with the FSDoH, personnel that mans the clinic and supervise students are employed by both the FHS and FSDoH. Figure 2 from left to right is Dr René Botha (Coordinator for Community Based Education and Rural Health- UFS), Ms Elisa Lekula (Assistant Nurse- FSDoH), Mrs Patience Mloi (Professional Nurse- FSDoH), Ms Sinna Khabodiso (Community Healthcare Worker- FSDoH) and Anele Mthiya (Mobile clinic operator-UFS) at Vlakfontein, 16km northwest from Trompsburg.



Figure 2 Personnel providing mobile health services

Though the above maps provides clear locational information, the sometimes vast distances (some days $\pm 30\text{km}$ dirt road) can only truly be experienced as part of the crew; figure 3A and B provides some context.



Figure 3A



Figure 3A& B FHS mobile health service going boldly where no mobile has gone before

During the first six months of operation a total of 1329 patient visits were recorded.

- Trompsburg 594
- Springfontein 418
- Philippolis 317

Students from the Schools of Allied Health Professionals, Clinical Medicine (figure 4) and Nursing will accompany FSDoH personnel during the visits.



Figure 4 Students providing essential services during these authentic learning sessions

Services provided

The services offered include the FSDoH's Primary Healthcare Package: HIV, TB, mother and child health, immunisations, chronic disease management, etc. From the FHS additional services such as optometry, and other allied health services such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy will be offered. A Service Level Agreement outlines the service, roles and responsibilities of the signatories (FSDoH and FHS, UFS) to the agreement.



Figure 5 Faculty of Health Sciences fulfilling its social justice and teaching and learning mandate

The Office of Community Based Education and Rural Health would like to express its appreciation for the support and collaboration to FSDoH and the Trompsburg, Springfontein and Philippolis farming communities.