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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: DR. ELIZE ESTERHUIZEN – TRAUMA UNIT AND CASUALTY – PELONOMI HOSPITAL ORANGE FREE STATE

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity– Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA	Joining us on the line today from Bloemfontein in South Africa is Dr. Elize Esterhuizen, who is responsible for the management of the Trauma Unit and Casualty at Pelonomi Hospital in the Free State. Welcome to the show Dr. Esterhuizen!
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Thank you very much, it's a pleasure to meet you all and it's exciting to talk to you all.
DR. MALKA	Thank you, we welcome listening to some of the components that you've got to share with us, particularly within the emergency medicine and trauma space. These environments are highly pressurised and often it really is the difference between life and death. You've worked in trauma for more than 30 years, please can you tell us more about the work that you do as well as the responsibilities that come with holding this role.
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Yes, thank you very much, I'm going to give you an overview; I'm responsible for the Trauma Unit and the Casualty Department and just to inform you about the two areas; the Trauma Resuscitation Unit consists of actually 18 resuscitation beds and our Trauma Ward of 50 beds and we've got a short-stay room of about 10 beds. So my daily duties include all sorts of patient care, obviously, so that will include stabilising emergency patients and doing procedures and imaging in order to reach a diagnosis and after that our patients will be disposed to either the ward or the ICU or to a theatre or in cases of minor injuries the patient may be discharged. Our wards, we've got ward rounds in the morning and I am also doing consultant rounds in the ward and also then consulting rounds in our Casualty Department and our Casualty Department's will see the majority of medical emergencies, like the stroke patients or heart attack patients or heart failure and all those cases and also minor injuries and ailments. We see about 2,500 to 3,000 patients in the Casualty Department per month and around about 350 to 400 patients in the Trauma Unit, The Trauma Unit will then obviously see all the major trauma injuries. That's about the patient care and then I've got the management of our personnel and all the HR issues going with that and including in-service training of our personnel. I also have some management duties regarding infrastructure and our equipment, the ordering, the maintenance and the financial implication of our equipment and then I've got some management duties; I need to attend meetings and be on committees, drafting policies and making sure all reports are done for incident events and issues like that from the hospital and I also have an academic function. So we're training the pre-graduate students, they are with us on ward rounds and then after that we need to monitor and assist them and teach them regarding procedures and patient care and I also have the registrar of training post-graduate training, we've got academic meetings and I'm also involved in the in-service training of our

	<p>hospital personnel, especially resuscitation training and emergency training. So, that in short, is more or less what I do on a daily basis and the responsibilities that I have.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>That is certainly a full-time function, from looking at the academic aspects of training up new recruits to addressing the normal management and day-to-day operations within both the Trauma Unit as well as the Casualty Department. What would you say are some of the greatest challenges in this role?</p>
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	<p>Well, if I can say the greatest challenges is just to manage everything and to attend to anything, but that's what makes it interesting. It's not like a routine every day and it's different and that is actually exciting.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I'm sure no two days are ever the same and your intake is approximately a hundred new patients walking through casualty doors, alone, every day. The other very significant aspect, given our world as we currently operate in now with the Covid-19 pandemic, is the fact that Pelonomi Hospital is one of the designated hospitals responsible for managing Covid-19 cases; to date globally, there's been over four million infections, over 1.1 million deaths and in South Africa there have been over seven hundred thousand cases and I think we're on the cusp of or just exceeding nineteen thousand deaths. Firstly, as a doctor, how have you found that life has changed for doctors in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak?</p>
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	<p>Ya I think as doctors we first of all have a duty to serve and care for our patients and I can assure you honestly, just as the community out there is afraid and is stressed, so are we. So we have our fears, we're also stressed in this situation, but we need to also care for our patients. The other factor is that sometimes you feel overwhelmed, it is like an influx of patients and we also get all the referrals from outside, it does make it a bit difficult sometimes and especially regionally, we had like a resistance from other healthcare workers to accept patients, because I think it was like a stressful thing and a new thing for all of us and the other factor that influences the whole Covid environment is that our working conditions are very difficult and physically exhausting, it's very difficult to work with full PPE, the Personal Protective Equipment, the gowns, the visors and everything, it's uncomfortably hot, it is physical, it feels uncomfortable and then also our working environment is different. It's crowded, there's a lack of space, we need to keep patients apart, it's difficult to work with that and our patients are also getting frustrated, the waiting times to get test results because our labs are overwhelmed. During the lockdown, however, I must honestly say with the lockdown level 5 and the alcohol ban, we saw only emergencies and that was manageable. When the levels changed and we went to level one it was a bit different, so then we had a flock in of patients, our trauma patients increased and I think the whole issue of our colleagues getting sick, your colleague is sick and in a serious condition, that puts another stress on you. Some of our colleagues died, which is a very emotional thing and you get stressed, so those conditions I think actually caused a lot of stress on healthcare workers physically, emotionally and I think we will really see later the effects of this pandemic on the functioning of healthcare workers.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Listening to everything you are expressing, you've witnessed this first-hand, on people's emotions, on wearing full protective personal equipment, the mental anguish as well as the physical stress. One of the things which I think is of grave concern as a country is the fact that several countries in Europe have now entered into a second lockdown period because there's been a resurgence in Covid-19; do you anticipate that from a healthcare perspective</p>

	that South Africa is adequately prepared for a second wave?
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	I must honestly say prepared maybe in the sense that this is now, this disease will not be new to us as we started out, we will be aware, we will be much more prepared in that sense that you will actually be on the lookout for these patients, but emotionally people, healthcare workers are tired and it is as if they cannot bear to take it for much longer or also our resources I think is stretched to the limit at this stage. We hope that our PPE will last and that really this is putting an additional stress on the functioning of the hospital and then care for the normal day-to-day emergencies and really, we spoke about it among colleagues the other day that we really hope and pray that it's not happening in South Africa or that it is spread out, but the problem is, it's like a situation that you cannot predict the end of it and that makes it much more tiresome and stressful. You don't know when this is going to end and you don't know when the stress will be over, so I think in that regard it's very stressful and from the healthcare worker point of view, we really hope and pray that this is not going to happen in South Africa or that a vaccine will be found, but in practical reality I think that we all hope for the best, that there's not a peak second wave coming for us again.
DR. MALKA	And the points that you're making are really to reiterate that people adhere to precautionary measures, so, to continue with social distancing, to continue wearing their masks, to continue washing their hands frequently and refrain from practices that could expose you to Covid-19 because of the seriousness of it.
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Yes, I think and this is very important a message that the community must not become ignorant and think that this is now over. We need to adhere to healthy and sanitising conditions throughout, wearing a mask, social distancing and try to just keep this disease under control, we must not now relax in total and all the good work that has been done, just throw it overboard, we need to prevent a second wave by just adhering to all of those conditions.
DR. MALKA	Would you say there have been any specific healthcare implications for women in particular, as a result of Covid-19?
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	I don't think women in particular, but it all depends on the functions of individual women, it's usually the mother, the wife that's dealing with the kids, the mother the wife that's dealing with family members coming home from different areas. So maybe the risks are higher and but the affecting part, I think all of us are exposed equally, it's just that I think in the duties that the mother or the wife is experiencing that she can be more at risk. Traditionally it's the mother escorting children and fetching them at schools and attending events or making sure that there's food at home, so these factors can maybe increase the risk of the women in our communities.
DR. MALKA	Our programme is a gender based programme so we have a strong focus in terms of aspects that influence or better conditions for women. We've spoken about some of the medical and healthcare consequences of Covid-19 and we all know that it has had significant social and economic impact the world over and the long-term effects are still to be shown. One of the aspects which came to light in an article which focused on women's leadership spoke about countries that are led by women, such as New Zealand, Finland, Germany and Taiwan and it also spoke about specific management characteristics that seem to be part of female leadership, such as collaboration, transparency, empathy and delegation. Can you share with us some of your views regarding women in leadership?

<p>DR. ESTERHUIZEN</p>	<p>Yes, I think first of all the women must be given the equal opportunities in leadership positions and positions in leading the country or whether it's a business or a hospital or whatever, with no judgement, with no focus awaiting them to make a mistake, because I think women tend to be more hard working and they are more dedicated with more perseverance. They add like a sort of female finesse to it and they are driven to make a success and I think they usually put in a lot more effort because they need to prove to themselves and also need to prove it to their families, because they're still a mother and they're still a wife, with additional functions and duties, but I think really the mindset of women is more to be with more empathy and more thorough and this is that female finesse that I'm talking about and I think that is making a difference and it contributes to their success and obviously I think there's a lot of factors playing a part in that, but as you mentioned, all those women led countries, it's actually we can see that they are an example to a lot of other countries in how they managed this pandemic.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>It also strikes me that when we see clear examples of positive female leadership, that why we don't see more countries taking an active role in terms of driving female leadership for women to lead their countries.</p>
<p>DR. ESTERHUIZEN</p>	<p>Yes, I think this is very important, I think we must also not just generalise and individualise some of the countries and I think the focus must be on the mindset of the women, they need to have the motivation and support in order to go further. We need to give them the opportunity to go ahead, but in order to do that I think women need motivation and like from people having an influence in their lives from school days. Teachers can play an important role, serve as a role model and be an advisor and I think a lot of countries just need to take that step, if the correct woman comes along, I'm sure that woman can stand up, put up her hand, so that she can be the person leading the country and leading those pandemics and important issues in our country.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>You have got a wealth of knowledge and experience; given what you know to date, what do you think we need to build on the most to benefit women in the future?</p>
<p>DR. ESTERHUIZEN</p>	<p>At this stage I think we are actually concentrating and I think emphasising the education part of it to give them opportunity in the first place, to expose them, and the whole mindset of going forward is very important, I really think it comes within. You will have the female or the lady or the girl as from the beginning, you can see that person wants to go forward and the whole issue is to give her the opportunity in whichever area she is interested. If I can just take it from my perspective that there were certain figures in the school, certain role models in my school career, when I started to realise that this is the model that I want to follow and if you don't have an initiative either coming from the parents, which means there must be a healthy family support structure and then a healthy support of teaching and upbringing and then obviously the factors going with that to enable you to go forward. Your upbringing regarding morals and what you're going to follow in life, that must be the base of your growing up and you must know whenever you're on your own, what is the difference between right and wrong, what have I learned, what did my parents teach me, what did I learn from my teachers to make the correct decision in life and these factors, early on, must be available for that girl to make the correct choices in life and I think that whole support system has got different legs and factors and it can be different people, as long as they are available in that person's life.</p>

DR. MALKA	Thanks for sharing your views Dr. Esterhuizen.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Dr. Elize Esterhuizen, who is responsible for the management of the Trauma Unit and Casualty Department at the Pelonomi Hospital in the Free State. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter:@WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of the conversation Dr. Esterhuizen spoke about the work that she does in the Trauma Unit and Casualty Department at Pelonomi Hospital. We also heard first-hand what the experiences are of frontline workers working in the Covid-19 pandemic and we spoke about the role of women in leadership, both from a country perspective as well as a corporate or organisational perspective.
DR. MALKA	Dr. Esterhuizen being in the medical space, science, technology, engineering and mathematical subjects have been cited as pivotal for jobs of the future, but when we look at various reports they constantly indicate that women have been underrepresented in these disciplines and as a result of that there will be a gap and a disadvantage to work and job opportunities for them in the new world going forwards; do you think that the environment in South Africa is supportive enough towards young female scientists and are there any differences in how women in the sciences are perceived today in comparison to when you were a student?
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Yes, I really think there is a difference, I honestly believe that this has improved over the years and I think we must say to one another we're never doing enough, we must always try to improve and I think one needs to emphasise that from school, from education part, that's where everything starts and there is some programmes available, what I know of and what we're personally involved in, the Take a Girl Child to Work, where we actively try to get females, girls and take them to different departments, to different working environments and expose them to science, research and physics and so on. There's also like an Expo programmes for young scientists that we drive and try to involve more girls and I think the whole effort must be together in order to expose the young ladies of today to different areas and as soon as we expose them and motivate them, it's only then that she will be able to make the decision, what is the best choice for her and I myself think that definitely the attitude towards women changed, there's a change in my colleagues to acknowledge the skills and the characteristics of our females in science and their positions. I really believe that females can multi-task and they can be much more successful, there's a vast area of careers that they can follow and where they can make a contribution to science and mathematics and engineering and I really think that these programmes must be actively available in schools so that the children can participate, especially our females.
DR. MALKA	We've spoken about education a lot today and we've also spoken about exposure; what role would you say that education and exposure played in your life?
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Well I must honestly say I think a big change came in my life when I was in high school. I had a...our headmaster was like persuasive and he had a statement which he made very frequently and he was always telling us you get nothing for free in this life. To make a difference, to reach your goals you will have to work hard and I must honestly say at that stage I believe he just wanted us to pass the papers and the exams, until it really kicked in in high school days and I also saw I had a role model, my maths teacher was a lady and at that stage in my life I was always used to male teachers doing the maths and it clicked to me, if I work hard, if I really

	<p>keep on working hard, as the headmaster said you don't get anything for free, you need to work hard, I can be this lady and I can also do this. So I think in terms of education, what that played in my life is my role models and I also had serious support from my mother, supporting me and motivating to do better, to always do better and it was never enough just to pass, you had to do better and that I appreciated and that was the driving force for me to just go forward and that's why I say, starting from education point of view, also you need a role model, you need something to follow, to have as a goalpost there in front, that's what you're aiming for.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Absolutely, I mean role models I think are sometimes underestimated as well as mentorship, that they provide something tangible, something for you to visualise and see what they've achieved and bring that into your own ambitions to become that. One of the questions that I ask my guests on this programme who've made tremendous achievements in their respective fields of expertise, is about some of the factors that they consider have contributed to their success, whether that has been a particular person in their life, whether it has been about perseverance, hard work; what would you say have been some of the key drivers to your success?</p>
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	<p>I think that the hard work and perseverance is definitely the most important thing to go forward. There's a saying to say that even if you go forward a little bit, the direction is forward and you keep, you know, keep on going. Also the key drivers for me was not to let any obstacles or difficulties stop you, it is not the obstacle or the difficulty that needs to block you, but it's how you go about it, how you're going to manage it and that makes you stronger. The other key drivers for me was to take responsibility for your decisions, whatever you decide in life, take responsibility, deal with the consequences and make the best of it and also to be very, very consistent, honest, but going forward and like I said my most important thing was to have the perseverance to go on. It's not...all of us at some or other stage, there will be a problem or there will be an obstacle, but it's how you deal with it, how you manage that obstacle and that makes you stronger and it's not that the obstacle can throw you off course, you must see it is a detour and you will deal with it and you come back and you follow your goal and that don't give up, just don't ever give up, you just go forward and that's I think one thing that one must learn very early in your life, to be able to go on.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You have a great tenacity about you and I really liked your expression where, you know, people often give up because they're not seeing progress, but when you said even if you go forward, just a little bit, it's still in a forward direction, you're still moving, you're still going towards your goal. Earlier you mentioned your maths teacher as being a role model and your mom as being an important factor and driving you ahead; please tell us about some of the other strong women in your life?</p>
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	<p>Like I said, first of all my mother and she worked hard to bring us up and we had some difficult times, but so she's a role model for me and then early when I started to study there was the one doctor and she's actually from Central South Africa, a Doctor Vosloo and she became a cardiothoracic surgeon. In the early years as you can imagine, when I studied, there was...it was not very often that you see a female in that career, so I admired her and I wanted to follow a specialisation, I also wanted to follow that and I must honestly say a lot of my, when I started to study, there was like some female consultants which I admired and I followed that and I think the one person who made an impression on me</p>

	<p>is Mother Theresa, early in her life she decided a goal in her life and she was prepared to leave everything, she left her family, she left everything and she relentlessly focused on a goal and I'm not saying you must leave everybody because family is your strong support system, I'm saying for her, the way she focused on a goal, that to me was amazing and if you look back there's few people that will not know her, she's always remembered, she's well-known and it's because the way she followed the goal and she reached that goal. She won the Nobel prize and everybody was aware, but I don't want to stop there because not all of us maybe have the opportunity to meet these very important people in the world, I want to say just look around you. Just look around you, there's women who are pillars in your community, keep your ears and eyes open and you can learn from that because sometimes you lack a family support member, but look around you, there is somebody else in your community and I can tell you, in my work situation I had a previous area manager, nursing manager and I'm going to mention her, Matron Shayane [inaudible 0:32:37] she was the area manager and the dedication to her work, her dedication was amazing. We could have tough days, difficult days and she was just going on and with a big smile on her face, so what I want to say is we all know big strong women in very important positions and who are our role models, but we must not miss all the role models around us, there are a lot of them and we can learn from them.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You're so right and sometimes when we are lacking, as you say, a potential family member to fill a role, that we have got substitutes around us, that friends are sometimes the family that we choose in order to develop or to fill the missing pieces. Please can you share with us some of the pivotal moments in your life growing up and what influenced you to become the person you are today?</p>
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	<p>Yes, I think early in life pivotal moments is I lost my dad at a very young age, I was about eight years old and due to that it was just myself, my sister and my mom and she had to bring us up and we all worked very hard, it was very difficult times. So in that stage I very early learned to take responsibility and to work hard because it was difficult times. Another big achievement for me was to pass matric and to reach my dream to go and study medicine, I wanted to study medicine as from an early age, so it was very difficult so I was accepted and then I started studying and I had to work part-time in order to pay for my studies. So my mother's influence in that regard, although she was a big supporter and motivator for me and I always looked up to her, she was very strict in the sense to say you made the decision that you want to medicine, this will take hard work and it's difficult, so that's your responsibility. So I learned to be responsible, I learned to take responsibility and for my decisions, I decided to do that, so part-time work, difficult times, that was my choice and I had to live with that choice in order to reach a goal and to reach my dream and when I qualified, that was my biggest achievement, because I appreciated it, it was my most precious possession at that stage, that I qualified and I had respect towards all other people because I know how hard it must be and how they achieved it. So I think my lessons learned is we need to be responsible, it doesn't matter what happened to you, it may be difficult, make a decision on what you want to do in life and then you follow that and some or other way you will go through it, with support, with dedication, with perseverance, you will go through it and you are responsible for what's happening to you. It is what you set your mind on that will drive you and bring you towards your goal.</p>

DR. MALKA	Thank you very much for sharing that inspiring story of your journey and the belief and the dedication, but also very importantly, taking action and being responsible for your choices to get to your goals. Dr. Esterhuizen, we are coming to the end of the show and as we close out, could I please ask you to share a few words of inspiration or wisdom that you'd like to pass onto younger women that are listening to us on the continent?
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Yes, I want to give you some inspiring words and I think there is a lot of inspiring women out there that said very important things and some of them I want to share with you. The one is Gita Bellin and she said "Success depends on where intention is" and that's the start for all of us, we need to have intention to do whatever we want to do, set your mind on that and the next quote that I want to give you is "You should always be aware that your head or your mind creates your world" that will keep you going and the importance of having a goal or the mindset that you are in a direction on the way to somewhere, is the next quote by Eileen Caddy, she said "A soul without a high aim is like a ship without a rudder" and that to me is important to keep you on track and then I want to end with the most powerful one, although this is the one that I think is important for all of us, it was said by Ghandi and he said "You must be the change you wish to see in the world". So I want to say to all those girls out there, you go girl, the sky is the limit.
DR. MALKA	The sky truly is the limit, may you continue to keep touching and inspiring young people's lives as they go through their medical journey or as patients when they encounter you. Thank you so much for joining us today.
DR. ESTERHUIZEN	Thank you very much, thank you very much and all the best to all the girls out there.
DR. MALKA	Thanks Dr. Esterhuizen.
PROGRAMME END	