MEDIA STATEMENT

TUESDAY, 07 DECEMBER 2O21

VARIOUS MEASURES HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE ATTACKS ON HOSPITAL STAFF BY MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS

As part of efforts to reduce attacks on hospital staff by mental health care patients in public hospitals, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) provides continuous training to its staff on how to manage aggressive patients.

For the period between January 2020 to November 2021, there was a total of 41 attack incidents on staff by mental healthcare patients.

These attacks vary, but in the main revolve around nurses, doctors and security guards being either assaulted or bitten by mental healthcare patients. In another incident a patient at a clinic in Sedibeng Health District pulled a light bulb from the ceiling and attacked staff.

The 41 attack incidents happened in 10 healthcare facilities in the province namely, Far East Rand Hospital (12), Leratong hospital (7), Pretoria West Hospital (6), Tembisa Tertiary Hospital (5), Jubilee Hospital (4), Odi Hospital (3), Tara H Moross Psychiatric Hospital (2), Lenasia South District Hospital and Levai Mbatha Community Healthcare centre had one incident each.

Various measures that have been put in place to reduce attacks on staff include sedating mental patients at casualty on arrival at a facility where necessary. In other instances mental healthcare patients are admitted to 72 hour observation units immediately. Doctors and nurses accompany each other when attending to mental healthcare patients.

In addition, the Department has placed security personnel at casualty department to assist with psychiatric patients.

The Department has reported all the cases as Injury on Duty and referred them to Employee Assistance Programme for further management.

Ends/

Issued by Gauteng Department of Health

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