

NEWS BULLETIN

Official Newsletter of the Gauteng Department of Health

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2 Digital fingerprint system to improve identification of unclaimed bodies



Gauteng health laundries working at optimal level, but can do better



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~MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.
#AsibeHealthyGP

Gauteng health staff make collective commitment to enhance patient care

Creating a welcoming environment for improved patient experience of care is a task that requires the involvement of various role players and a change of mind set. This is the consensus arrived at during the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH)'s Quality Assurance seminar that saw over 700 delegates attending the session physically and online.

Held on Friday at the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre in Boksburg, the seminar is part of continuous measures taken by the GDoH to reduce the level of complaints and patient safety incidents, and improve patient satisfaction levels.

On a daily basis, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) receives complaints related to amongst others, staff attitude and patient care-related. This affects the quality of service delivered and leads to negative impact in trust levels among patients.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko said that it is no secret that there is a widespread dissatisfaction among the public regarding the treatment provided in our hospitals and clinics in the province.

"Understanding the state of mind and pain that patients experience when they come to our healthcare facilities is crucial for providing compassionate and effective care. As healthcare professionals, it is essential to approach each patient encounter with empathy, sensitivity, and

a genuine desire to alleviate their pain and suffering.

"When patients seek medical assistance, they are often in a vulnerable state, both physically and emotionally. Pain, discomfort, and anxiety can accompany their condition, making it vital for us to create an environment that acknowledges and addresses their needs. By actively listening, observing non-verbal cues, and engaging in open and compassionate communication, we can better understand the unique experiences and concerns of each patient," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The seminar was held under the theme "Creating a Welcoming Environment for Improved Patient Experience of Care". It demonstrates the GDoH's dedication to explore ways to create an environment that uplifts patients' experience, and strive to protect and honour the dignity of every individual accessing healthcare in the public healthcare system.

In addition, MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said all GDoH staff members should play a crucial role in creating a welcoming environment.

"They should be trained to greet patients and visitors with warmth, offer assistance, and provide clear directions, making everyone feel valued and supported right from the beginning.



The Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko concluded a service delivery oversight visit at Thelle Mogoerane Hospital on Thursday, 13 July 2023.

This is part of the MEC's ongoing visits to hospitals, clinics and community healthcare centres in the province to improve patient experience of care and immediately address concerns and challenges that may affect services.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko assess the efficiency of the hospital's pharmacy in dispensing medication to patients and ensured that queues are managed.

The hospital has recently procured new kitchen equipment including ovens and pots. The kitchen is fully operational, and all nutritional needs are provided to patients.

"Moving into the wards, every member of our healthcare team must uphold the principles of care and courtesy. Nurses, doctors, and support staff should approach each patient with empathy, actively listening to their concerns and needs. Treating patients as individuals and involving them in their care decisions fosters a sense of dignity and respect," said the MEC.

The Quality Assurance gathering was also attended by various stakeholders and different companies in the healthcare sector some of whom partnered with the Department to deliver a successful seminar.

Digital fingerprint system to improve identification of unclaimed bodies

The identification of unknown and unclaimed deceased bodies across Gauteng Forensic Pathology Service (FPS) mortuaries has now been made easier, thanks to the deployment of technology. This will further afford many families an opportunity to find closure as they will be able to give their loved ones a dignified burial.

Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi together with MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko unveiled the digital fingerprint system on Thursday (13 July), to be used to identify deceased bodies at the 11 FPS mortuaries in the province.

This digital innovation will help improve the quality of fingerprints collected as it uses biometric scanners and third-party access to the databases of Department of Home Affairs, South African Police Service and National Credit Bureau to identify deceased bodies. MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that the introduction of the system stands as one of the transformative milestones in the field of forensic pathology.



"This innovative technology will improve quality of fingerprints collected from the deceased resulting in improved identification rate which in turn will lead to the tracing of families of known unclaimed bodies," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The system was piloted in January 2023 at 5 Gauteng FPS mortuaries which include Bronkhorstspuit, Johannesburg, Diepkloof, Pretoria and Ga-Rankuwa. To test the efficiency of the system, a sample of 65 body trace requests were done and 61 of these were successfully identified, with 25 families traced. Four of the bodies were found to have fraudulent identities.

Currently, there is a total of 841 unknown bodies across the 11 FPS mortuaries in the province. 150 were identified using fingerprints send directly to the Police and are still unclaimed by their families and relatives. Efforts to trace the families are underway which involve using the super trace links to credit bureau, adverts in the local newspapers and cooperation with the SAPS to assist with the tracing.

Of the unknown deceased people, 691 are unidentified due various reasons such as burns and skeletal remains and undocumented

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~MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

individuals. These would then be handed over to various municipalities for pauper's burials.

The rollout of the digital fingerprint project is in partnership with The Centre for Public Service Innovation an entity of the Department of Public Service and Administration and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Forensic Pathology Service who started this project using biometrics scanners and third-party access of Department of Home Affairs, South African Police Service and National Credit Bureaus database to identify deceased bodies.

Bertha Gxowa Hospital successfully performs first Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

Mampe Marapyane

Bertha Gxowa District Hospital recently marked a significant milestone for its newly established Surgical Department after successfully performing its first Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy.

A patient in her mid-forties presented with right upper quadrant pain which is what is commonly seen in patients with gallstones. An ultrasound was performed on her and it showed that she had multiple gallstones impacted into the gallbladder, and clinicians at the hospital decided to perform a Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy.

Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy is an innovative surgical procedure that involves the removal of the gallbladder through small incisions, using a camera inserted into the abdomen.

Gallstones are generally caused by abdominal fat or the excess of a substance in our bile



known as bilirubin. Most people who have gallstones will never experience gallbladder pain and will be able to live their lives ignorant of them.

Patients who experience recurring pain in the upper right part of their abdomen, known as biliary colic, may need to have their gallbladder removed. The gallbladder stores a substance called bile, which helps with digesting fats. Sometimes, when the flow of bile is disrupted, stones can form in the gallbladder. This can lead to complications like pancreatitis, cholecystitis, cholangitis, and even an increased risk of developing cancer in the long term.

Dr Ferini Dayal, a surgeon at the hospital said that through the procedure, clinicians are able to decrease the chances of these complications occurring in the gallbladder and improve the overall health of patients.

"As a district hospital, patient selection is crucial to ensuring optimal results. Patients with gallbladder stones identified through ultrasound and other imaging can now undergo this procedure at our facility.

"By offering this service, we do not only provide relief to our community, but also, alleviate the burden on tertiary institutions while equipping our young surgeons with essential skills," said Dayal.

Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy offers several advantages including reduced hospital stay, less post-operative pain and quicker recovery for patients.

By offering this service, we do not only provide relief to our community, but also, alleviate the burden on tertiary institutions while equipping our young surgeons with essential skills" ~Dr Dayal.

Gauteng health laundries working at optimal level, but can do better



The maintenance of Gauteng Health laundries has been prioritised to ensure consistent supply of clean linen and blankets for hospitals and clinics.

This week saw MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko concluding service delivery oversight visits to three laundries in the province which include Dunswart Provincial Laundry, Edenvale Hospital Laundry and the Johannesburg Laundry Services.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that it is important that the laundries are well-run and maintained to ensure that the day-to-day operations at health facilities continue as expected.

"Many aspects in our health facilities, particularly hospital depend on these laundries. If there is no clean linen in a surgical ward, surgical procedures that require consistent changing of linen get delayed.

"The provision of clean patient clothing, blankets and scrubs also depends on working laundry services," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Dunswart serves 12 hospitals and 83 clinics and Community Healthcare Centres (CHCs) in Ekurhuleni and Sedibeng.

The Johannesburg Laundry serves 5 facilities, Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital, Helen Joseph Hospital, Dr Yusuf Dadoo Hospital, Discoverers CHC and Hillbrow CHC.

Edenvale Laundry services, Edenvale Hospital, South Rand Hospital, Ziwe Tropical Disease Hospital and Tara H. Moros Psychiatric Hospital and Alexandra CHC. The hospital has also procured new boiler and laundry equipment to improve its capacity.

The Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital laundry serves this facility including Carletonville Hospital and Bheki Mlangeni Hospital, and surrounding Clinics and CHCs.

Masakhane Laundry serves two central institutions, Dr. George Mukhari Academic Hospital and Steve Biko Academic Hospital. It also supports three regional hospitals, four district hospitals and four 4 specialist hospitals and 69 clinics and CHCs. Currently, Masakhane is partially operating as the process to appoint a new maintenance contractor is underway. This is expected to be concluded before the end of the coming week.

To ensure consistent supply of clean linen and other materials to the facilities serviced by Masakhane have diverted the linen to Dunswart and Edenvale in the meantime.

What to do if you suspect that you have mental illness?

Visit your nearest clinic as the point of entry for mental health services in the province. All health facilities provide mental health services at all levels of care. The entry point is primary health care services which are accessible in all districts.

YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS TO US!

They say being a nurse/sister/doctor is just a job. What the staff here at Bertha Gxowa Hospital have done, was way beyond just a job. They took pride in their job and go the extra mile to do what they love. They showed so much passion, joy and professionalism in everything they did. They gave all the accurate information and never once did they refuse.

The staff here at Bertha Gxowa Hospital has restored my faith in government hospitals. If I had to put a private hospital and Bertha Gxowa next to each other, they would go hand in hand.

I will forever be grateful for everything you did for my daughter and myself. From the nurses, sister, doctors, to the ladies serving the best food, to the ladies that cleans.. You are all amazing. You are all doing an outstanding job. Thank you from the very bottom of my heart. Your good work does not go unnoticed.

Much appreciation from Neanté and Liahnaé (Nay Nay) (P.s. I hope all the staff in the Paediatric ward and much

more gets to read this. If you could post it, it would be phenomenal)

Neante van Niekerk

Facebook

QUALITY ASSURANCE CONTACT US!

For any hospital or clinic complaints please contact the Gauteng Department of Health on the 24-hour customer line on.

0800 203 886 (Toll free number)

patients.health@gauteng.gov.za or support@gauteng.gov.za

SMS : 35023

For letters, contribution and suggestion contact GDoHStories@gauteng.gov.za

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10 YEARS
NELSON MANDELADAY

UNITE
SPEAK
ACT
LEAD
LISTEN
REMEMBER
LEARN
FREEDOM
TRUTH
JUSTICE
EQUALITY
TRANSFORMATION
NELSON MANDELA
TRANSFORMED THE WORLD
CELEBRATE HIS LIFE
AND VALUES
CHILDREN
YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
TRUTH
FREEDOM
EQUALITY
MEMORY AND DIALOGUE
JUSTICE
FREEDOM
RECONCILIATION
EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP
UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION
HUMAN RIGHTS
GENDER
EQUALITY
VULNERABLE
COMMUNITIES
AND OTHER
PEOPLE
THE WORLD
AND THE
MORNING
OF PEACE
THROUGHOUT
THE WORLD
RESOLUTION
CELEBRATE
HIS LIFE
AND VALUES

**IT IS IN
YOUR
HANDS**

**MAKE EVERY DAY
A MANDELA DAY**

SURGICAL MARATHONS ON NELSON MANDELA DAY

Nelson Mandela International Day, commemorated on the 18 July annually is a day for call of action for people to devote 67 minutes of their time to positively impact communities and the lives of people.

This year marks 10 years since the death of Nelson Mandela. To commemorate his life, the Nelson Mandela Foundation has themed the 10-year remembrance call to action: *"The legacy lives on through you"*.

In response to the call of action, the *Gauteng Department of Health will conduct hundreds of operations on Mandela Day* to reduce the current surgical backlogs. The operations will also be conducted beyond this period

#MandelaDay2023 #ItIsInYourHands #SurgicalMarathons