

# NEWS BULLETIN

Official Newsletter of the Gauteng Department of Health

12 AUGUST 2023



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MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko visiting the newly opened Eye Clinic at Far East Rand Hospital. The clinic boasts state-of-the-art equipment that has allowed the facility to offer comprehensive eye care services which include screening, diagnosis, and treatment.

The hospital intends to soon offer Ophthalmology services which will allow the clinic to perform eye surgery.

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## Accident & Emergency Unit refurbishments help improve patient flow

The Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness this week (10 August) unveiled newly refurbished and expanded Accident and Emergency Unit (A&E) at the Jubilee District Hospital in Hammanskraal. The unit is set to improve patient flow and allow for the accommodation of advanced medical equipment.

The A&E annually sees more than 30 000 patients who require emergency medical care. However, over the years the infrastructure was no longer adequate to service the growing need of those depending on the facility for services.

The refurbishments include the expansion of the Triage area and Resuscitation area, new flooring, ceiling, roofing and frosted glass to divide consultation rooms for patients' privacy.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said the Resuscitation Area of the unit will serve as a critical zone where swift and precise medical interventions can make all the difference between life and loss.

"Recognising its paramount importance, we have undertaken a substantial expansion to ensure that our capacity aligns with the demands of emergency situations. The result is a more spacious and strategically designed area that empowers our medical professionals to address a larger number of patients requiring immediate resuscitation simultaneously," stated the MEC.

Previously, the A&E triage could not accommodate the increased number of patients accessing the hospital. The larger space now allows for improved communication between medical staff, patients, and their families, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of each patient's situation.

"As a critical point of entry, this enhanced Triage Area ensures that patients are directed to the appropriate care pathways without unnecessary delays, leading to more efficient treatment and improved overall patient experience. By enlarging the Triage Area, we've created a more welcoming and efficient space where patients can be promptly evaluated and categorized based on the urgency of their condition," explained MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

In addition to the reopened A&E unit, several wards are currently undergoing refurbishments at the facility and this is part of a direct response to the challenges the hospital faced due to structural limitations. These renovations are expected to have a positive impact on the quality and accessibility of healthcare services provided within the facility.

Jubilee hospital board member, Tony Nyatlo welcomed the investment made to improve

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the A&E and the work that is currently underway in other sections of the hospital saying the facility services a growing population and it was important that a conducive environment be created for both patients and staff to ensure quality of care.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko has made an undertaking to focus on infrastructure improvements across facilities, amongst other priorities, as part of efforts to better patient experience of care.

## SIU welcomes action taken against Tembisa hospital officials



**SIU SA**  
STRIKING AGAINST CORRUPTION

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has welcomed the disciplinary action that is currently being taken against Tembisa Provincial Tertiary Hospital officials based on the forensic investigation report by the unit made public in December 2022.

This comes after the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) announced on Tuesday (08 August) that the employees who were sighted in the report and those that could have been involved in some of the transactions have been placed on precautionary suspension as part of pursuing the disciplinary process.

"We welcome the disciplinary action taken against Tembisa Provincial Tertiary Hospital officials based on findings and recommendations made by the SIU," said Kaizer Kganyago, spokesperson for the SIU.

Of the nine employees sighted in the SIU report, six officials were suspended as of 10th July 2023 to enable disciplinary proceedings to get underway and an investigator has since been appointed to further deal with the matter. The Deputy Director for Supply Chain has since retired, a Chief Physiotherapist has since resigned, and a sessional Medical Officer has since stopped working at the facility.

The GDoH said that it will further consider its options in relations to those that have already terminated their services. On the other hand, the SIU said that it will pursue officials who resign in the face of an investigation or disciplinary action by freezing their pension benefits and institute civil litigation to recover financial losses suffered by state institutions.

The processes pertaining to the disciplinary case involving the suspended GDoH Chief Financial Officer and Tembisa hospital Chief Executive Officer are underway and handled from the Office of the Premier. The two officials have since been charged. The first set of hearing has sat, and the next set will be sitting in October 2023.

The Premier's Office signed a Secondment Agreement with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to investigate the allegations of maladministration, fraud and corruption related to the Supply Chain Management processes at Tembisa Hospital under the Gauteng Department of Health as reported by the late Babita Deokaran.

Among the recommendations made by the SIU was that "based on the findings in respect of the

irregularities highlighted as per the payment bundles received, the SIU would recommend that disciplinary action be instituted against all officials responsible for the adjudication of the various quotations received."

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## Alternative Building Technologies relieving pressure on Gauteng hospitals

The Alternative Building Technologies (ABT) structures that were erected as part of response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic have not only helped to decongest and relieve patient overload in four Gauteng public hospitals but have also allowed for the expansion of healthcare services.

These hospitals include the Jubilee District Hospital, Bronkhorstspuit District Hospital, Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital (CHBAH) and Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMHAH).

Currently, the 300 bedded ABT structure at Jubilee Hospital has been divided into five 35-bedded and five 25-bedded units. The 35-bedded units include two male and two female medical wards, and one surgical ward. The 25-bedded units include the Intensive Care Unit, Gynaecology and Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Units, Sub-acute or step down unit, Medico Legal Clinic and Male Medical Circumcision Clinic, as well as a staff wellness clinic.

The structure has allowed for continuation of services while infrastructure refurbishments on some parts of Jubilee Hospital are underway. During the recent Cholera Outbreak in the Hammanskraal area, the ABT structure played a pivotal role as two wards were used to admit

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patients suspected to have and those with confirmed Cholera disease. The separation of the patients also prevented cross infection.

The 150-bedded ABT structure at Bronkhorstspuit Hospital has allowed for the expansion of services and increased bed capacity, relieving pressure on Mamelodi Regional Hospital. The hospital now

offers diagnostic services such as sonography which is housed in the ABT structure.

Post COVID-19, the unit has been utilised for a 10-bedded 24-hour Accident and Emergency (A&E) Unit, 30-bedded male medical ward, and for optometry and ophthalmology services. A total of 116 beds will be repurposed to accommodate 36 medical beds, 36 surgical beds, 16 paediatric beds, 14 A&E beds, 14 isolation beds, and a rehabilitation unit for physio, occupational and speech therapy, and podiatry services.

The 500-bedded ABT structure at CHBAH was initially used as a stepdown for stable COVID-19 patients. However, when cases became less, it was then used as a step down unit for surgical and internal medicine departments.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko revealed in a written response to a question in the legislature that the structure has not been in use for 3 months, however, plans to use the facility as a step down for internal Medicine and Surgical Departments remain.

"Further plans include to reconfigure the structure to accommodate a multidisciplinary Comprehensive Oncology and Gynaecology Unit. Repurposing the facility to become an Oncology Unit will provide additional capacity for cancer treatment thus reducing waiting times and improving outcomes for the affected patients.

"The reason for relocating gynaecological inpatient and outpatient services to the repurposed ABT is to release space and additional beds to accommodate the overflow of patients in maternity and improve compliance to infection control principles," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Meanwhile, the DGMHAH uses sections of its 300-bedded ABT structure for two medical wards with 59 beds. It is being used as a pharmacy and has 3 storage units for the facility. The structure has also helped to decongest the hospital's Accident and Emergency from admitted medical patients without beds.

The hospital has plans to repurpose the structure to expand its services. The ABT will soon accommodate four departments which include Family Medicine, Medical Outpatient Department, Clinical Psychology and a discharge lounge.

In addition, the DGMHAH's ABT structure will also include two units for Onsite Maternity and Birthing, two units for a 24-hour gateway clinic and six units for District Hospital services to expand access.

# Investing in smart technologies to improve emergency response



In spite of an increase in the demand for emergency medical services in Gauteng owing to a growing population and high volume of calls, the Gauteng Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has managed to maintain 88% response time for calls under 60 minutes, known as the golden hour which is aligned to international standards (80%) and trends.

This was revealed by MEC for Health and Wellness Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko when responding to questions in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

Nkomo-Ralehoko gave an assurance that Gauteng EMS continues to work on strategies to improve priority 1 response times under 30 minutes in urban areas and 60 minutes in rural areas.

Of the +- 70 000 emergencies being responded to by EMS on a monthly basis 3% of these amount to priority 1 cases (life threatening). Of the 3%, 1% is medical cases and 2% is made up of trauma cases that require the intervention of law enforcement agencies.

The MEC stated that in a bid to improve response

times the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has invested in smart technologies such as push to talk devices that have live tracking to emergency calls and tracking, panic buttons and cameras in the emergency vehicles in order to mitigate against paramedic attacks which contributes towards delayed responses.

Other interventions include continuous engagement with law enforcement agencies (SAPS, Metro Police and Gauteng Crime Prevention Wardens) to assist with escort to areas that are marked as hot zones.

"In addition, we have procured five 4x4 specialised ambulances to access all terrains in the province and also implemented Gauteng Scheduled Emergency Transport (G-SET) which is meant to reduce the patient waiting times during referrals between health facilities," explained Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The introduction of G-SET will further free up ambulances to respond to primary calls like accidents, assaults, house emergencies and others. The G-SET programme has already yielded positive results so far in terms of

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The MEC pointed out that service delivery protests and hot zone - where Ambulances must first be escorted by the police before entering areas - and paramedic attacks are among the leading causes delays in respond times.

The GDoH continues to plead with the public to not block ambulances during protests and also to not allow criminals to intimidate EMS crews from discharging their duties.

# One patient one file system to help improve experience of care



The deployment of the Health Information System (HIS) at 37 Gauteng public hospitals and 31 Community Healthcare Centres (CHC) has enabled the one-patient-one-file tracking system.

Currently, the system is in its first phase and has improved patient administration, file management and the process of referrals at the 37 hospitals and 31 CHCs. The system has also improved billing of patients and revenue management for these hospitals.

Once a patient is registered on the system, a Patient Master Index (PMI) number is generated and it is used as a unique identifier. The PMI number plays an important role of enabling the one-patient-one-file tracking, a digital file is created on cloud which enables the tracking of the patient's history and movement at all the HIS-live in hospitals and CHCs.

The system is user friendly and is not difficult to navigate and understand. It has assisted managers with retrieving accurate reports and help hospitals record and monitor incoming revenue. Hospitals are also able to allocate and monitor bed occupancy using this system.

Out of all the CHCs in the province, only the Laudium and Zola CHC are outstanding to have this digital innovation installed. However, plans are underway to connect these facilities. The Zola CHC is expected to get connected before the end of this month (August 2023), while the Network infrastructure at Laudium CHC are delayed.

The SMS functionality of the HIS system assists with informing and sending reminders to patients about booked appointments and follow-ups. It also has referrals and patient tracing capabilities, which has shown improvements in tracing the patient's movement from one facility to another.

Since the deployment of this system in 2020, hospitals and CHCs reported that as they increase their utilisation of the system, they're able to assist more patients quicker, which ultimately results in the improved management of queues.

The GDoH is looking into additional efforts of improving network infrastructure at the donor sites used by some facilities including Sebokeng Hospital to power the server. The process to procure data centres and install UPS is underway,

and the Gauteng Department of e-Government is busy with the roll-out of battery replacement rollout at all donor sites to mitigate loadshedding downtime.

In addition, the GDoH is currently working with the National Department of Health to integrate the HIS with the Health Patient Registration System. This will eliminate dual utilisation of the systems to register and process patients

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# Decline in infant immunisation worrying

August is Child Health Month and parents are encouraged to ensure their children's wellbeing by ensuring that they do not miss out on necessary immunisation to protect them from disease.

The call for immunisation by the Gauteng Department of Health comes as the department tries to mitigate against the worrying decline in immunisation among infants (0 – 12 months).

A total of 217 787 (84.1%) infants were immunised in Gauteng in the 2022/23 financial year. This is a drop from 231 991 (88%) which was recorded in the 2021/22 financial year.

"This decline shows that parents do not adhere to appointments for follow-up vaccinations as set out in the Road-to-Health Booklet (EPI schedule). Another reason for the decline could be the measles outbreak in December 2022 which affected the last two quarters of the 2022/23 financial year," Sikhonjiwe Masilela, Director for Maternal, Neonatal, Child, Women's Health and Nutrition in the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH).

As part of efforts to improve the uptake in immunisation for infants and encourage parents to heed the call, the GDoH conducts social mobilisation activities in health facilities, communities and awareness campaigns on community media.

Parents are encouraged to ensure that their little ones are regularly immunised in order to protect them against diseases such as polio, tuberculosis, hepatitis, measles and meningitis. Immunisation has also proven to strengthen a child's natural body defences, reducing their likelihood of getting diseases.

"Immunisation is free and available at all government primary health care facilities and hospitals. It is important that parents ensure that

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*~Mr Masilela*

they do not miss the date for your clinic visit, and if they do miss it, they should return as soon as possible. All children between six months and five years should receive Vitamin A and deworming medicines every six months. This helps to keep them healthy," added Masilela.

For your child to grow and develop best they need good nutrition, protection from diseases and adequate healthcare when they are sick. It is important that children get the extra care and support they need.

## Road to Health

**IMPORTANT:** Always bring this book when you visit any clinic, doctor, or hospital.



The Gauteng Department of Health urges parents to ensure that children are immunised as set out in the Road to Health Booklet in order to protect them against diseases.

Immunisation helps protect against diseases such as polio, tuberculosis, hepatitis, measles and meningitis amongst others, and it stimulates a child's immune system to fight against infectious diseases later in life.



**YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS TO US!**



### 'Siyabonga kakhulu,' family tells Far East Rand Hospital staff

It took us a while to be able to write this message. I wanted it to be from the heart and not just a spare of the moment thing.

We are eternally grateful for how our dad was treated by yourselves at Ward 4. The care you gave him was as if you knew how important he was to us, and for going beyond your call of duty making him comfortable in his last days, showing him Love anganazi siyabonga kakhulu. In his own words, our dad said "bangiphatha kahle lana".

We also have a matron in the family who was coming to see him and attested to this. She was impressed on how clean he was and that to us eased the pain of wondering if our dad was loved and cared for. We witnessed strangers loving our father like we did. Siyabonga kakhulu, may God reward your goodness and show you favour in all your endeavours.

Gilbert Simelane was a pastor, husband, brother and a loving father of four, 2 girls and 2 boys with six grandchildren. He died with his dignity intact all thanks to you. Nikwenze nakwabanye, Siyabonga.

From Ntombintombi, Bongiwe, Manqoba and Mpumelelo Simelane.

\* Letter grammatically edited

**QUALITY ASSURANCE CONTACT US!**



For any hospital or clinic complaints please contact the Gauteng Department of Health 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](mailto:GDoHStories@gauteng.gov.za)

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