

NEWS BULLETIN

Official Newsletter of the Gauteng Department of Health

27 AUGUST 2023



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Gauteng Wellness-on-Wheels to provide on-the-go counselling support to paramedics

When Lorraine Mojela (26) decided to pursue a career as an emergency services personnel, she never imagined that one of the greatest threats to executing her work would be the constant attacks that she and her colleagues come under from the very communities they serve.

Mojela is one of almost 20 Gauteng Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics who came under attack while responding to emergency calls since the 2022/23 financial year to date, with 15 of the attacks happening in the previous financial year.

Her incident is recent and happened in the evening of Friday, 18 August 2023 when Mojela, an Intermediate Life Support paramedic reported for duty and immediately after getting to her Gauteng EMS base in Westonaria, West Rand, she and a colleague responded to a call of a distressed family in need of emergency services in Spook-Town, an informal settlement in Bekkersdal.

When they got to the area, a car parked on the side of the road flicked their lights repeatedly to the ambulance. The paramedics stopped thinking it is the family they are responding to and that, maybe the patient is in that particular car.

It was when one of the assailants approached them with a gun that they realised the call was a hoax to lure them out so they can be robbed. They tried to drive away but the attackers' car blocked them and the assailants opened the ambulance door, got into the ambulance and demanded they give them all the gadgets in the ambulance or else they will be shot.

Mojela and her male colleague had to let go of the gadgets as they feared for their lives. This traumatic incident, which is one of many barbaric encounters that EMS personnel have to endure regularly, left Mojela very traumatised and full of fear when in the line of duty.

After these traumatic events, Mojela and many other colleagues still report to work and perform their duty as they have taken an oath to service communities. However, the trauma still persists and hopefully, through the newly introduced Gauteng Wellness on Wheels (GWow), many will overcome their traumatic experiences.

"Now that the Gauteng EMS has launched the GWow I believe that we will get the necessary additional support we need to heal from these traumatic events we go through every day in the workplace.

"We will now have access to psychologists who will provide counselling on the spot and hopefully we will have one-on-one sessions and address how these attacks are not only affecting us personally but even our obligations to perform our duties and service the communities of Gauteng in desperate need of emergency medical care services," said Mojela.

Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko unveiled the GWow, a mobile wellness centre that will provide counselling and physical wellness checks to Gauteng paramedics on-the-spot, particularly after experiencing traumatic ordeals such as violent attacks and hijackings.

GWow is not only a response to the challenges experienced by Gauteng EMS paramedics but a much needed intervention to strengthen the existing wellness support programmes (emotional, financial and mental) to improve employee morale and outreach support.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that GWow will bring some sense of comfort and relief to paramedics who endure countless challenges in the workplace including amongst others, danger and emerging crime against paramedics, and violence and

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harassment when dealing with hostile patients and criminal attacks.

"GWow is a direct response to the pressing concerns we have witnessed among our emergency personnel. We recognise the physical and emotional toll that facing danger, dealing with hostile patients, and encountering criminal attacks can take on our paramedics.

"GWow stands as a symbol of care and support for our dedicated emergency medical services personnel, lovingly known as the Green Angels," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

In addition, the Gauteng EMS also launched a mobile classroom bus to enhance employee training and development. The training that will be provided in the mobile classroom will improve performance and patient experience of care, among other key areas.

The mobile classroom is equipped with a projector, desks and sound system that will also be used during public education programmes such as the First Responder Training, safety workshops and for on-site meetings where office space is not available especially during disasters.



MEC for Health and Wellness, and Convener of Faith Based Organisation in Gauteng, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko took part in the Prayer Day for Social Cohesion and Nation Building at Zoe Bible Church in Pimville, Soweto. The Prayer Day deliberated on societal issues which include crime, alcohol, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy amongst others. A basket of health services were available on the day including COVID-19 vaccination, blood pressure and diabetes testing, HIV testing, PrEP, counselling and ART treatment and, re-initiating those who stopped. [#AsibeHealthyGP](#)

No rest until mastermind behind Babita's assassination faces justice

It is incumbent upon the justice system to pursue every lead, explore every avenue and relentlessly seek out those who orchestrated this tragic assassination of Babita Deokaran.

This is the emphatic view of Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko who spoke during the second anniversary of Deokaran's assassination on Wednesday, 23 August 2023 at the Christ the King Anglican Church in Mondoer, south of Johannesburg.

Deokaran was a Chief Director: Financial Accounting at the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) and was assassinated outside her home on 23 August 2021. This is after she uncovered corruption within the GDoH, particularly Tembisa Hospital.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that Deokaran's pursuit of justice and her fierce stand against corruption ultimately led to her tragic end.

"Babita's courageous efforts to uncover and address corruption within the GDoH were not merely professional obligations but a reflection



of her deep-seated belief in the importance of transparency, accountability, and the well-being of the citizens she served.

"With determination, she confronted corruption head-on, exposing the rot that threatened to undermine the integrity of our institutions. Her advocacy was not just a professional responsibility; it was a moral obligation she took upon herself, driven by an unyielding commitment to uphold the values that our society should hold dear," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The six individuals who admitted their culpability in the tragic demise of Deokaran were sentenced this week. The sentencing of these individuals marks a pivotal moment in our pursuit of justice, and is essential to recognise that it is but a beginning, a crucial step on the path to ensure that those responsible for this heinous act are held fully accountable.

In addition, MEC said that the GDoH is committed to justice not only to Deokaran's legacy but also to the principles that uphold our society, principles of accountability, integrity and the protection of every citizen's right to live without fear of violence.

"Let us unite in our determination to see this through, to stand unwavering in our pursuit of justice, and to ensure that those who masterminded this tragedy are held accountable for their actions," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The MEC gave an assurance that the wheels of justice are turning as disciplinary processes are in motion against employees who have been implicated in wrongdoing at Tembisa Hospital. This is in response to the findings of a forensic investigation report conducted by the Special Investigating Unit, which was made public in December 2022. .



MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko satisfied with state of the Far East Rand Hospital mortuary

The MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko has expressed satisfaction with the state and functionality of the Far East Rand Hospital (FERH) mortuary.

This comes after the MEC conducted a service delivery oversight visit on Monday (21 August) to the hospital's mortuary which came under scrutiny following allegations about the functionality of the fridges and cold storage facilities.

"I am satisfied with the work that is being done at the facility. There is a lot of improvement from where it was 12 months ago. There are no issues with the facility's mortuary and cold storage facilities. In fact, the hospital's mortuary has surplus capacity to store bodies and has no backlogs.

"We always appreciate it when the public raises concerns and highlight areas they are unhappy with so that we can attend to these, but equally, the complaints must be based on fact and not on speculation so as to enable us

to implement interventions where necessary," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Currently, the hospital's mortuary fridges and cold storage facilities are in good functional state and the turn-around for families collecting bodies is normally 12-72 hours unless the body is of a pauper which then would require other processes such as tracing before a burial process would follow involving other stakeholders such as the municipalities.

The mortuary can accommodate 89 bodies in storage and are designed to store bodies and keep them in good condition for a period of more than six (6) months. Only 6 cold storage fridges are currently not in use as they are undergoing statutory maintenance. An active maintenance contract is in place up to March 2024. This is to ensure a quicker turnaround time whenever there are faults.

Meanwhile, the MEC used the opportunity to get appraised on how the facility is doing on the uptake of the Health Information System (HIS).

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Far East Rand Hospital is one of 37 Gauteng public hospitals, and 31 Community Healthcare Centres (CHCs) using the one-patient-one-file tracking system.

"This system has improved patient administration, file management and the process of referrals across our hospitals and community healthcare centres. 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," said the MEC.

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.

The SMS functionality of the HIS system assists with informing and sending reminders to patients about booked appointments and follow-ups.

*As part of strengthening relations with funeral parlours, faith based organisations and other stakeholders in the sector FER hospital will be hosting an engagement session on Monday, 28 August at the facility.



Legacy of Charlotte Maxeke lives on through empowerment of others

Angie Mokgothu

Education has proven over time to be an effective weapon against poverty, unemployment and inequality in many communities. This is more true when one looks at the life of social and political activist uMama Charlotte Maxeke.

The stalwart was the first South African black woman to graduate with a university B.Sc degree from Wilberforce University Ohio in 1903 as well as the first African woman to graduate from an American university.

In her honour, the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital (CMJAH) partnered with the Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute (CMMI) to handover of books including the screening of a documentary

about the life and journey of uMama Charlotte Maxeke as part of Women's Month programme. uMama Charlotte Maxeke dedicated her life to the struggle for women's rights and education for all. The CMMI lives up to one of its values, education, by empowering and capacitating CMJAH school kids through donating books to the school.

During the book handover, the chairperson of the CMMI Thulasizwe Makhanya, who was accompanied by the Maxeke family, pledged more support to the school. "As the Institute, we are happy to support the school, and we pledge to continue to support these kids because they are our future leaders," said Mr Makhanya.

Before the screening of a documentary, CMJAH CEO, Gladys Bogoshi expressed gratitude to everyone who supported the event. "Today

Charlotte Maxeke, an exemplar of resilience and a driving force for change, stands among the luminaries of our struggle for justice and equality. The decision to rename a hospital in her honour was a fitting tribute to her enduring impact on healthcare and society at large"
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is about uMama Charlotte Maxeke, it is about every woman out there. I would like to thank every one of you who came to honor our struggle icon, whom the facility is named after."

Gauteng MEC of Health, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko said that Maxeke's humility was a source of strength, an instrument that empowered her to lead with empathy, to listen with an open heart, and to learn from the diverse perspectives she encountered. In an era when opportunities for women were limited.

"Charlotte Maxeke, an exemplar of resilience and a driving force for change, stands among the luminaries of our struggle for justice and equality. The decision to rename a hospital in her honour was a fitting tribute to her enduring impact on healthcare and society at large," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Women take the lead in bringing health services to Ratanda Hostel

Koketso Maraba

In celebration of Women's Month, MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko collaborated with the Women In Health initiative (WIH) to take health services to the doorstep of residents in Ratanda Hostel, a TISH (Township, Informal Settlement and Hostel) community in Heidelberg as part of the #AsibeHealthyGP campaign.

Women across various disciplines in the healthcare sector took the lead in offering health services to residents of Ratanda, in particular females, allowing them to consult with gynecologists for pap smears, family planning, and mammograms.

MEC Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko called out to the community of Ratanda to use healthcare services that were offered by women. She promised the community that through the #AsibeHealthyGP campaign and the Lebone College of Emergency Care some of the community members will be taken through the First Responder Training to equip the with the skills to respond to medical emergencies as they await professional personnel.



Nwabisa Mhlaba an Occupational Therapist at Heidelberg Hospital said that making healthcare accessible to people shows health professionals care. "It is important to make healthcare accessible because many socio-economic factors affect the community, making it hard for people to access healthcare services. So when we bring services to them, we take away the burden of lack of resources imposed by lfactors such as poverty and joblessness."

"We are here at Ratanda Hostel to teach people about the various services that we offer so that they understand our role as healthcare

professionals and to learn how to access the medical services offered by the Department. The more we avail ourselves to the TISH communities the more people become knowledgeable on how to identify and treat illnesses, and to maintain a healthier lifestyle. As a result, people can spread the correct information among themselves and this helps prevent long-term effects of untreated illnesses," pointed out Lienka de Beer a Dietician from Heidelberg Hospital.

The Department is expected to conduct 17 other visits to TISH communities across all five districts until November 2023.

Not all heroes wear capes

Rudzani Matshili

Not all heroes wear capes, and a classic example of this truth is Enrolled Nurse Tebogo Maloka, who selflessly donated one of her kidneys to her sister back in 2006.

Seventeen years have now passed since the transplant and the donor, currently employed at Dr. George Mukhari Academic Hospital remains in good health. The 53-year-old is using National Organ Donor Month to dispel misconceptions related to organ and tissue donation.

Discussing her choice to donate a kidney, she said her sister Connie Maloka who has since passed away, had been visiting the hospital three times a week, enduring four-hour dialysis sessions each time.

The frequent visits made her life challenging given the extensive hospital hours. Maloka said her sister had been on dialysis for six years prior to her donating the kidney, after being diagnosed with a kidney disease in 2000.



"My sister was going through a tough time, undergoing dialysis three times a week and facing significant challenges. One day, after returning from the hospital, she informed us about her need for a kidney donor. The entire family went through a matching process, and I was identified as the suitable donor. I was genuinely happy to be able to offer my assistance.

"The next step was to go through all the necessary preparations and screenings to see if I was fit to donate. I went through all the clinics within the hospital, and I was found to be fit. The day came and I spent about four hours in the theatre," she said.

Her happiness, however, was short lived as the recipient's body rejected the organ.

She recounted their disappointments, saying: "Unfortunately her body rejected the kidney which meant that she had to go back to dialysing. We were lying in bed after the surgery, waiting for urine output in the catheter, but unfortunately, nothing came out, indicating the procedure was not successful," said Maloka.

It takes a few minutes to hours after surgery for some people to urinate, which is considered a positive sign that their body has accepted the new kidney, and it is functioning well.

However, for others, this process might take a few days to occur. Blood tests are also conducted post-operation to assess kidney function.

In a case where it is being rejected, individuals might exhibit symptoms such as fever, flu-like feelings including body aches and headaches. Despite the outcome, Maloka stands proud knowing that she tried assisting her sibling.

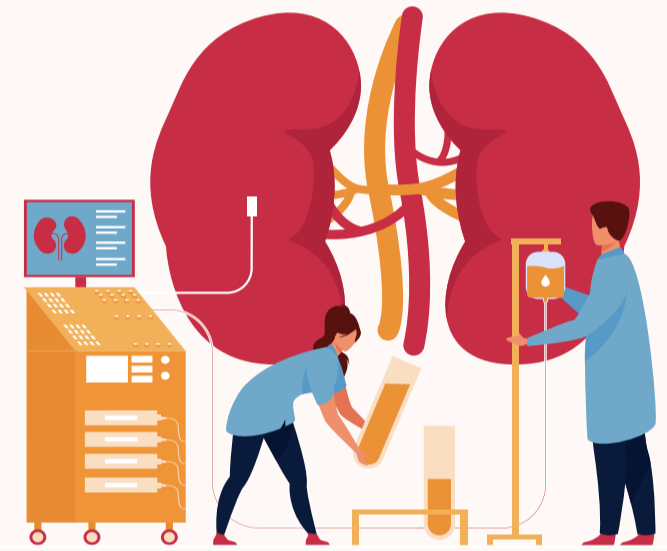
"After donating the kidney, I saw how important it is to save a person's life. I did not even feel any pain after the procedure, and I've been living with one kidney for 17 years and I don't have any health issues. Stop believing myths like "you won't enter heaven with missing organs", that is not true," she concluded.

When Connie passed away in 2015, she was still on dialysis. .

FANA KA MPHOTO YA BOPHELO FANA KA SETHO SA MMELE KAPA THISHU

Motho e mong le e mong a ka fana ka ditho tsa mmele kapa dithishu, ho sa tsotellehe semelo sa hae sa setso kapa bodumedi. Batho ba bangata ba unne molemo ka ho fuwa ditho tsa mmele kapa dithishu ditsong tse fapaneng le bodumedi mme maphelo a bona a fetotswe.

Bakeng sa tlhahisoleseding e batsi, etela webosaete ya Organ Donation Foundation ho: www.odf.org.za



YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS TO US!

Kudos to Bertha Gxowa team

My name is Snoxolo Ntuli. I just want to complement Bertha Gxowa District Hospital. I have never seen such good doctors, nurses, cleaners and even the ladies who serve food to patients.

Impatho, thank you so much. We are normally the first ones to complain so why not tell when People do right. They are very patient with izguli zabo (patients).

Keep up the good work. Siyabonga, without you we wouldn't survive.

* Letter grammatically edited



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

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