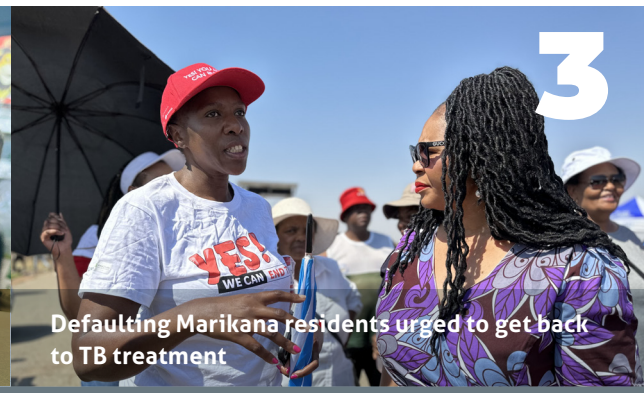




2 Safer food, healthier communities



3 Defaulting Marikana residents urged to get back to TB treatment



5 The District Health Service Model brings mental health services closer to the communities



## Kagiso recovers from severe burns to celebrate her 7th birthday in style

Lerato Sedulawesi

After suffering severe hot water burns with a combination of partial thickness burns six months ago, seven-year-old Kagiso Molaoa recently got to celebrate her birthday as a recovered burns patient.

The Sebokeng District Hospital's Paediatrics Department was filled with festivities on Friday, 29 September 2023 when Kagiso's family, the surgical, paediatrics, medical, physiotherapy and nursing teams celebrated her birthday and recovery.

Kagiso was showered with gifts by the Sebokeng District Hospital staff, who also celebrated her successful recovery after undergoing six operations and has survived three septicaemia attacks which needed high care isolation.

The Grade 1 learner from Small Farms in Evaton was rushed to the hospital after accidentally colliding with a stove which had a pot with boiling water while playing around the house. The hot water poured onto her tiny body and caused 26% burns to her body.

Fortunately, she was rushed to Sebokeng hospital, where she spent a night in Casualty. The medical teams at the hospital incubated, applied a burns shield to the fresh wounds and admitted her.

Kagiso's mother, Dimpho Ntsala said that her daughter received the best medical care. She had doubts that her little one was going to pull through due to the extent of the burns sustained.

"We know that it is the healthcare workers' jobs to save lives but it is hard to trust them in situations such as the one my daughter was involved in. It is now when I see her fully recovered that I believe that the care she received was high quality.

"I am sincerely grateful to all the surgical doctors and hospital staff, including the medical interns who fought tirelessly to save my daughter's life. I cannot thank them enough," said Dimpho.

"We know that it is the healthcare workers' jobs to save lives but it is hard to trust them in situations such as the one my daughter was involved in. It is now when I see her fully recovered that I believe that the care she received was high quality.  
~ Dimpho Ntsala



MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko conducting a service delivery oversight visit at Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Vooslorus, Ekurhuleni.

The aim of the visit was to identify an area within the hospital to build a wellness centre for the staff. This will promote healthy lifestyles among employees.

#AsibeHealthyGP

According to Dr Thomas Mtshali, Kagiso had to undergo tangential excision to remove deep skin and multiple debridement. She then had to do staged skin due to the large surface area which had to be covered as there was less surface area to harvest the skin from.

"I want to thank the nursing staff in the Paediatrics Department and the medical teams that were involved in managing Kagiso. None of this would have been possible if she had not received the right care. Kagiso is a strong, lucky survivor," said Dr Mtshali.



# Safer food, healthier communities

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has intensified health education and advocacy on food safety practices.

This comes after incidents of food poisoning in Naledi and Protea South in Soweto, Johannesburg and Bekkersdal in Westonaria, West Rand, which resulted in the death of five children, while the other four received medical care at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital and Leratong Hospital and another one recovered at home.

The GDoH Outbreak Team working with Environmental Health Practitioners from municipalities and other stakeholders has been conducting health education on food handling, preparation, storage and food safety, as well as the importance of checking food expiry labels, hand washing before handling food. They also provided advice on what to do when presenting with food poisoning symptoms such as cramping, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea.

Food poisoning can occur as a result of people eating contaminated food. Lack of proper usage of pesticides (insect poison) or rodenticides (rat poison) can contaminate food and result in fatalities. It is important that these poisons be stored and applied in a manner that will not contaminate food items, as this can result adverse health outcomes for those who consume the food.



Refilwe Mokgetle, GDoH Director for Public Health said that residents should exercise extra precaution about where they buy their food items and the general handling of food as this is important to their well-being.

"We have closed some spaza shops in the province due to poor hygiene practices seen in those outlets. Some of these shops still keep food that is expired on their shelves. Part of the monthly safety blitz we conduct is to educate shop owners on the dangers of keeping such products.

"It is important for consumers to avoid buying food items with broken, torn or damaged packaging, including dented, bulged or leaking canned foods. People should not buy or eat food items that have passed their sell-by, best before or use-by date, even if it smells good," said Mokgetle.

She further advised communities not to buy perishable and nonperishable food from shops and vendors who do not have a valid compliance certificate. The certificate must always be displayed where customers can see it or can be produced on request.

The GDoH has through its Food Safety Blitz directed more resources into eliminating possible foodborne illnesses and infections in the province. Communities and shop owners have been cautioned to be vigilant and attentive when preparing and storing food, to have good hygiene practices by washing hands repeatedly, using disinfectants, or water and soap, and protecting food from insects and rodents.

It is important that people wash fruits and vegetables before eating them, keep cooking surfaces clean, separate raw and cooked food, cook food thoroughly and use safe water and raw materials to eliminate the chances of food poisoning.

## SAFER FOOD, HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Do not buy or eat food items after the use-by or sell-by date, even if it looks and smells okay. Carefully look into the packaging and if the date is not visible choose another item.



## Skills to respond to emergencies boost public confidence

Thobeka Makhubela

The number of Gauteng residents getting equipped with lifesaving skills to respond to commonly encountered emergencies while awaiting the arrival of appropriately qualified emergency care personnel is increasing.

This comes after the Lebone College of Emergency Care, a tertiary institution of the Gauteng Emergency Medical Services (EMS) conducted the First Responder Training at Kwesine Hostel in Katlehong, Ekurhuleni on Wednesday, 04 October 2023.

The training saw 60 residents of Kwesine Hostel receive training in performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation on victims who do not have a pulse and are not breathing, assisting victims when they have convulsions, management of critical wounds such as stab and gunshot wounds, assisting victims who fell from heights, victims with sprains and strains, and victims of drowning and burns.

The First Responder Training is an initiative by the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) which aims

to equip 2 500 people living in townships, informal settlements and hostels (TISH) with lifesaving skills that can make a difference between life and death. So far, 546 people in TISH communities have undertaken this critical training.

During emergency incidents that pose a threat at life, every second counts. The immediate response in critical situations can make all the difference between life and death. Therefore, equipping individuals with lifesaving skills, the GDoH is creating a network of community responders who can provide immediate assistance until professional emergency care personnel arrive.

Nonceba Mahlangu, one of 60 trainees from Katlehong who is also Parliamentary Constituency Office Administrator said that many people in TISH communities have been left stranded, not knowing what to do in emergency situations. However, the training has opened a door for real-life superheroes who will be able to make a difference in saving lives.

"Normally, when we come across emergencies, we panic and end up not being able to act quickly and fail to assist the victims. This training has boosted my confidence because moving forward, I will respond without panicking and possibly save a life," said Mahlangu.

The First Responder Training is also aimed at encouraging Gauteng residents to explore and see emergency medical care as a career choice. Those who are looking at emergency medical care as a potential career choice can visit the LCOEC website on <https://lcoec.ac.za/> for information on the enrolment process.



## Defaulting Marikana residents urged to get back to TB treatment

Koketso Maraba

After indicators showed a decline in the recovery rate of people with tuberculosis (TB) in the Marikana Informal Settle in Vanderbijlpark, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has intensified the campaign to bring back many on to their treatment programme.

The campaign comes as Quarter 1 report outcomes of the 2023/24 financial year revealed that the Sedibeng District is still experiencing a high mortality of 15 % (94 patients) and a loss to follow up rate of 9.9% (60). These numbers are concerning, considering that Sedibeng is a small municipal district compared to metros and contributing almost half of the deaths of Johannesburg (200 deaths) which is a metro.

Grace Radebe, TB programme manager in the Sedibeng District Health Services said that the awareness campaign was targeted at the community of Marikana due to the alarming increase of infections in the area.

"The Marikana informal settlement is situated far from any public healthcare facility. This could be one of the reasons many default, however, we are here today to encourage those who are defaulting to get back on treatment," said Radebe.



Sedibeng has also seen an increase in the number of Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB) patients, which could be as a result of the high default rates. Those who default have a high and increased risk of mortality, resistance amplification and transmission of resistant TB within the community.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko who led the campaign said that TB is a curable disease and people do not have to die from the disease each year.

"We are here to ensure that the many community members who are defaulting on TB treatment in this area are put back on their regime as soon as possible. We cannot continue burying our loved ones due to TB, a disease which is curable and has treatment available at all levels of healthcare in the province," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Julia Monamodi, a recovered patient who accessed TB treatment at Bophelong Clinic said that she has joined the campaign to show many that the disease is curable if one sticks to their regime.

*We are here to ensure that the many community members who are defaulting on TB treatment in this area are put back on their regime as soon as possible. We cannot continue burying our loved ones due to TB, a disease which is curable and has treatment available at all levels of healthcare in the province."*

*~ MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.*

"I managed to recover because I was consistently taking my medication as instructed by the nurses. There is also support provided by the Ward-based Primary Health Care Outreach Teams to ensure that we do not default," said Monamodi.

## Dr George Mukhari mends Maseka's heart for her to inspire others

Rudzani Matshili

Forty-nine-year-old Lillian Maseka's story shines a beacon of hope on many with heart diseases.

Having endured a lifelong heart condition that led to two surgical procedures at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital, the mother of two chose to share her journey with the hope of lighting the way for others facing similar challenges.



Maseka's first heart surgery was a Double Valve Replacement surgery - a procedure involving the replacement of both the mitral and aortic valves. She was only 15-years-old when she received the critical surgery that gave her a new lease at life.

The successful heart surgery marked the beginning of a new and promising chapter in her life. However, in 2015, she faced another challenging chapter in her journey, requiring yet another surgery, this time to replace a single valve.

Maseka said that aims inspire many who have heart related issues to seek medical attention and follow their doctors' advice all the time.

"After my first operation in 1990, I lived a normal and healthy life and I was only taking Warfarin. But years later, I started to experience symptoms such as tiredness and pain where it was determined that I needed to do yet another valve replacement surgery. I went ahead with it, and ever since then my life has gone back to normal and I continue taking my medication as per doctor's order. I even have two kids born subsequent to my operations, both without heart problems.

"If you experience alarming symptoms, please go to the hospital immediately. Take your doctor's orders and avoid eating whatever the doctors tell you to stop eating," she said.

Food items that can pose a risk on a person's heart include the consumption of fried fast food, particularly when the same oil is reused multiple times to prepare food. This practice poses significant health risks.

It is, furthermore, important that people with chronic illnesses such as high cholesterol, hypertension and diabetes take their treatment regularly in order to reduce the risk of heart failure.

More risk factors that could cause heart failure are smoking and excessive use of alcohol.





# The District Health Service Model brings mental health services closer to the communities

Dr Cathrine Sibeko

As the country gears towards observing World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2023 under the theme “Mental Health is a Universal Human Right”, let us be reminded that mental health is everyone’s responsibility and that we all have a role to play when it comes this medical condition.

We may have broken the ice when it comes to mental health in recent years, however, it is still deeply stigmatised and poorly understood by many in our communities.

The continued discrimination, harmful stereotypes and stigma in the community, family, schools and the workplace prevent healthy relationships, social interactions and the inclusive environments needed for the well-being of all members of society.

As the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) we fully support those who advocate for Mental health to be squarely placed in a human rights framework to re-cast the aspiration for sound mental health as a fundamental human right.

Ensuring access to mental health services is an obligation and responsibility of government and relevant stakeholders, namely, family, communities, civil society and the private sector. There is increasing evidence that the prevention

of mental ill health is possible by using both general and targeted evidence-based interventions. These can improve outcomes for individuals across the spectrum of mental disorder and life course. And as the GDoH, we have been hard at work strengthening our district offices to provide more sustainable community-centred mental health services and support.

Now, we have clinical community psychiatry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) governance and compliance teams at our service points. The teams also assist by creating awareness in communities about dealing with life stress, focusing on the overall well-being of residents.

When the clinical community psychiatry team identifies patients who need intervention, they provide family caregiver training and education on mental health, mental illness, identify patients’ symptoms and collaborate with the NGO governance and compliance teams regarding placement at an appropriate state or NGO institution if required.

In addition to this, the GDoH has in the past few years ensured the expansion of mental health beds across hospitals in the province. New mental health wards were established at numerous facilities including Edenvale hospital,

Tembisa hospital and Bheki Mlangeni hospital amongst others.

The Helen Joseph Hospital which has for many years struggled with an influx of mental health patients is also building a new mental health ward that will alleviate the pressure from the existing unit. The refurbishments at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital also saw the establishment of a new mental health ward, and the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital will soon open a new mental health unit.

Bertha Gxowa and Kopanong hospitals mental wards are currently under construction. Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital, South Rand Hospital, and Tshwane District Hospital are also earmarked to see additional mental health beds placed before the end of this financial year.

Although the battle is not yet won against mental health, the Department is continuing to intensify its efforts to capacitate the area more than ever. More work and interventions will be unveiled as the time goes by, and hopefully, with the support of families, communities, civil society and the private sector, we will be able to beat the stigma around mental health.

*Dr Sibeko is GDoH Director for Mental Health Services*



## Phillip Moyo CHC staff appreciated

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the following staff that were working night duty on the 20th September 2023 at Phillip Moyo CHC which is at Emaphupheni Ekurhuleni.

The staff was so kind, helpful, caring and very friendly during the consultation of my daughter. They all have good hearts with no bad attitude, clearly they love what they do. May God give them strength to serve the community with good hearts as they did.

I hope this email will reach them and their management. We truly appreciate such essential workers.

The staff names are as follows: Dr Tshabalala, Sr Ndobela, Sr Zwane and Sr Zuke

Thanks from Phillemon & Ritta

\* Letter grammatically edited



## 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](mailto:GDoHstories@gauteng.gov.za)

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