

NEWS BULLETIN

Official Newsletter of the Gauteng Department of Health

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- Premier Lesufi

Collaborations to link digital fingerprint system to SADC population registers

The Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) together with Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries have agreed to strengthen collaborations using technology to tackle the challenge of identifying people from the respective countries who die in the province without any form of identification.

This comes after Premier Panyaza Lesufi together with MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko engaged with representatives from SADC about the Digital Fingerprint System that is currently being used by the Gauteng Forensic Pathology Service mortuaries to identify deceased bodies.

The system uses biometric scanners and third-party access to databases of Department of Home Affairs, South African Police services and National Credit Bureau to identify the deceased. However, it cannot yet identify people from other countries.

The delegates agreed on the urgent need to link the digital fingerprint system with SADC population registers as a lasting solution in addressing the problem of undocumented immigrants at forensic pathology services mortuaries.

The meeting which was held at the Gauteng Department of Health offices in Johannesburg was attended by Ambassadors, High Commissioners and representatives of Zimbabwe, Mozambique,

Kingdom of eSwatini, Namibia, Botswana and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Premier Lesufi said that it was important for Gauteng to engage with representatives from SADC region given the high level of movement within the province by citizens of those countries.

"What we are doing here is part of consulting stakeholders and we believe that this is the beginning of better relations and cooperation among our respective countries so that we can assist one another in servicing our nationals," said the Premier.

Gauteng has seen a large number of unidentified and stateless people. About 1 859 deceased bodies were buried as paupers in the 2022/23 financial year. Sometimes paupers burials result in families coming at a later stage to request for exhumation of their loved ones' remains. In the 2022/23 financial year, there has been 248 exhumation requests that were approved. These exhumations cost the state R977 000.

The recent Johannesburg inner-city fire incident which saw 77 deaths further exposed the challenges posed by undocumented individuals, requiring countries to work together as it has implications which include



MEC Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko met with clinic managers to engage on various issues including the critical roles of played by clinics in the townships, informal settlements and hostels in the province.

During the meeting, the MEC reinforced the importance of the tasks clinic management, and their staff carry out in society. "Our mission and privilege is to ensure that every individual in these communities receives the care they deserve, delivered with compassion and a warm smile".

The managers were also onboarded on the "I Serve with a Smile" campaign which aims to ensure positive patient experience of care and improving staff morale.

delayed relief support in instances of disaster. The Ambassador of Zimbabwe to South Africa, His Excellency David Hamadziripi welcomed the collaboration to link the Digital Fingerprint System to population registers of SADC countries and said that the initiative demonstrates the spirit of collaboration and cooperation which will ensure that people are given a decent burial upon their demise.

"We pledge our cooperation and we are ready to work together with the Gauteng province to ensure that the linking of this system with our population register succeeds," said Ambassador Hamadziripi.

Odi Hospital now offers comprehensive eye care services



Communities of Mabopane and surrounding areas will now get comprehensive eye care services in their backyard. This came hot on the heels of the unveiling of a newly renovated Eye Clinic with cutting-edge ophthalmology and optometry equipment by the Odi District Hospital.

The unveiling of the clinic will provide a much relieve to the community members who used to travel to get eye care services from George Mukhari and Steve Biko Academic Hospitals.

Previously, the hospital's eye clinic operated in one big room with no consultation rooms to accommodate optometrists, ophthalmologists and ophthalmic nurses, as well as storage for equipment. And this limited the eye care services offered to the community of Mabopane and surrounding areas.

The newly acquired cutting-edge equipment in the clinic include an auto-refractor, retinoscope and ophthalmoscope amongst others.

The clinic is now equipped with consulting rooms for acuity tests, spectacle storage and spacious reception area for patients thanks to the generosity of the One Sight Foundation which has also donated similar eye care infrastructure and equipment to several Gauteng public hospitals.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko took to the stage and encourage the community of Mabopane to take advantage of the services offered by the newly renovated clinic instead of sitting at home using remedies that further damage the eyesight.

"When I was growing up, I had some issues with my eyes. And being from a rural town, my mother used some traditional remedies in efforts to cure my eye problems. For about seven (7) days, I had severe pains and my mom kept on using the remedy not knowing that she is putting extra damage to my eyes. We have a range of spectacles that our patients can also choose from and offer eye care treatment," said the MEC.

The State-of-the-art eye clinic has also allowed Odi Hospital to expand its eye care services and the hospital will now start conducting cataract surgeries and give the gift of sight to many in community members.



My queen, think of your little one's health and future well-being. Alcohol intake during pregnancy can cause foetal alcohol syndrome.

Visit your nearest clinic or Community Healthcare Centre for antenatal care services.

Itireleng CHC now offers key population healthcare services

Koketso Maraba & Pako Sejake

Key populations which include sex workers, persons who inject drugs, inmates and members of the LGBTQI+ community can now call Itireleng Community Healthcare Centre (CHC) in Dobsonville a safe haven.

This comes after the unveiling of a safe and friendly space Key Populations Centre at the CHC by the Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko. The CHC will provide comprehensive services that are tailored to meet the health needs of this group which stand a higher risk contracting and transmitting HIV and STIs.

The group's vulnerability to contracting and transmitting HIV and STIs more than the general population is due to marginalisation, socio-



cultural and structural factors such as stigma and discrimination, which contributes to their limited access to health care facilities.

"These centres of excellence have transformed the lives of key populations by providing them with the necessary support, care and empowerment to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. One of the notable strengths of this center lies in its commitment to confidentiality and non-discrimination. For key populations, who often face stigma and discrimination in society, finding a safe and welcoming healthcare environment can be a challenge.

"This initiative serves as an inspiration for other healthcare institutions and communities to work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive

healthcare system," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko. Centres for key populations across the province offer counselling, screening for HIV, STIs and TB, and access to Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and antiretroviral therapy (ART) amongst other services.

"Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) intended to have numerous centres of excellence for key populations across all five districts in the province. In addition to establishing these centres in the majority of our CHCs and clinics, we need to take a lead in ensuring that all our staff members are trained and supported through partner support to ensure continuous development to support service provision for key populations," emphasised the MEC.

Protect girls against cervical cancer later in life

Parents, caregivers and legal guardians of girls that are in Grade 5 and aged 9-years and above are urged to sign consent forms permitting school health teams to administer the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to their young ones.

The HPV vaccination second leg is currently underway in all public primary schools and Special Schools to protect girls from developing cervical cancer later in life. The campaign kickstarted on 04 September and will continue until 31 October 2023.

HPV is a common virus that can infect both males and females and could eventually cause cervical cancer (cancer of the mouth of the womb) later in life.

There are over 200 types of HPV viruses and research has shown that HPV types 16 and 18 accounts for more than 70% of cervical cancer cases. The Cervarix HPV Vaccine is very safe and effective in preventing the HPV infection caused by these two HPV strains (type 16 and 18).

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, has called on parents who have not yet signed the consent form to do so in order to ensure that their children do not miss out on the HPV vaccination drive.

"In February 2023 to March 2023 during the first dose of the vaccination drive, a total of 72



880 grade 5 girls out of 90 492 (80.5%) were vaccinated with HPV 1st dose vaccine. All these girls are due to receive their 2nd HPV vaccine dose. Those girls who were not yet 9-years-old and are still in grade 5 or were absent during the first round will also be given their HPV first doses," said the MEC.

During this period, the school health teams will also be administering a booster dose of Tetanus Diphtheria (Td). The Td vaccine is a booster dose, and it does not replace either Td given at 6 years or 12 years.

Tetanus and Diphtheria vaccination is given to prevent Td disease outbreaks in the community, among adolescents and to increase the Td immunisation coverage among school going adolescents. It is safe to give Td simultaneously with the HPV vaccine.

A consent form that was signed at the start of the year is used for routine comprehensive Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) and is valid for the whole year. ISHP includes school health screening (deworming, eye

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~MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko

health, hearing, oral assessment) and onsite health services.

No child will be screened or vaccinated without a signed consent form, however, children aged 12 and above can sign and consent for themselves.

Visually impaired Mpumalanga twins get more help at Steve Biko

As part of ensuring universal access to healthcare and improving patient experience of care, the Gauteng and Mpumalanga health departments have collaborated to ensure that twins living with Xeroderma Pigmentosum (XP) get more help.

XP is a rare disease of expansion and contraction of the skin leading to extreme dryness and permanently delays the ability of the body to repair and heal.

The two provinces agreed to a partnership in treating the visually impaired twins, Lwanele Sibongile and Lwandile Bonga Mkhonza, who are now aged 16. The twins were born in 2007 in the humble settings of Bethal in Mpumalanga.

Mpumalanga health has used a wholistic approach of manging the socio-determinants of health through collaboration with the sister department of housing to give the teenagers a formalised dwelling to limit exposure that will result in a flair up of their condition.



As part of the healing procedure, Mpumalanga health identified Steve Biko Academic Hospital (SBAH) as a centre of excellence, to provide cutting edge medical treatment for the twins. The patient journey at the hospital has spanned for over 14 years and has successfully contributed to improved quality of life for the tenacious twins.

On 02 September 2023, Mpumalanga MEC for Health, Sasekani Manzini, visited the twins at SBAH and engaged with the hospital management about their treatment.

During the visit, MEC Manzini also telephonically interacted with her counterpart in Gauteng, MEC Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, where the two principals agreed on ensuring that the Mkhonza twins continue to get the best medical treatment while under the care of the Gauteng Department of Health.

Both MEC's together with the SBAH's acting CEO, Dr Lehlohonolo Majake agreed that the two provinces will ensure the provision of transport to and from medical facilities for consultations, procedures and operations amongst other needs.

The two provinces will also ensure that the medication they require is adequately stocked and easily available to the twins when required.

In addition, MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko and Manzini agreed on unlocking any medical access across governmental institutions to ensure the twins are adequately supported with their medical needs.

SBAH further committed that they will ensure simplicity of admission processes of the twins and prompt facilitation of appointments by requisite specialists as delays exacerbates deterioration of symptoms, leading to complications.

Gauteng hospitals on board to serve patients with a smile



Thousands of staff members from 16 Gauteng public hospitals have thus far been joined the "I Serve with a Smile" campaign in order to ensure positive patient experience of care and improving staff morale.

These hospitals include Rahima Moosa, Pholosong, Tembisa, Odi, Steve Biko, Tshwane West District, Leratong, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, South Rand, Sebokeng, Carletonville, Sterkfontein, Dental and Oral - Pretoria, Jubilee, Heidelberg and Tambo Memorial.

The "I Serve with a Smile" campaign is a response strategy by the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) to address patient dissatisfaction, tackle complaints and foster a positive working environment among employees, as well as avoid unnecessary litigations and improving staff morale.

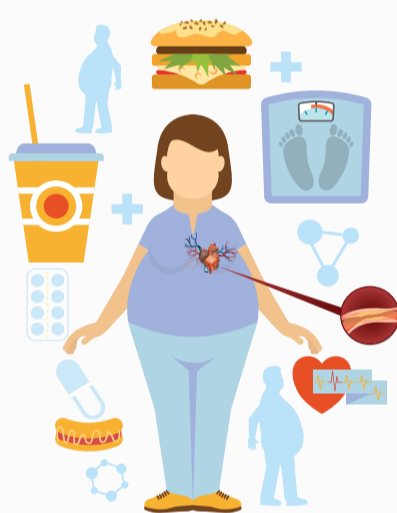
By promoting a culture of positivity and professionalism, the campaign encourages employees to approach their work with enthusiasm, empathy, and a friendly demeanor. The goal is to create a welcoming and supportive environment for patients,
 ~MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko who attended the

onboarding sessions for staff at Pholosong and Odi District Hospital said that the "I Serve with a Smile" aligns with the Batho Pele Principles and emphasises the importance of a positive and customer-centric approach to service delivery.

"This campaign recognises that attitude plays a significant role in the way employees interact with patients and fellow colleagues, ultimately affecting the quality and satisfaction of healthcare services provided.

"By promoting a culture of positivity and professionalism, the campaign encourages employees to approach their work with enthusiasm, empathy and a friendly demeanor. The goal is to create a welcoming and supportive environment for patients, making them feel valued and cared for," said the MEC.



RISK FACTORS FOR CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

The effects of behavioural risk factors of heart disease and stroke may show up in individuals as raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose, raised blood lipids, and overweight and obesity.

The risk factors include:

- Unhealthy diet
- Lack of exercise
- Tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol

Visit your nearest clinic or Community Healthcare Centre for assessments of effects of behavioural risk factors.



MATTERS TO US!



Princess Clinic gets a nod

Good day

I hope this email finds you well.

I just want to thank the three amazing ladies for giving me an excellent service yesterday. Everything was on point from the front desk to the nurses. I got to the facility at 09h30 and by 10h00 I was done. The nurses were just willing to assist me. I'm really grateful for that. The name of the ladies are Theresa Skhosana, Celeste Simelani and Karabo Matshongo thank you so much for you excellent service keep it up.

Thank you
Babalwa Dayimani

* 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

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