



The Gauteng Provincial Government has availed a hotline number to assist family members locate their loved ones. Enquiries can be made through the toll-free hotline number on 0800 203 886 or direct line during office hours on 0113553048/ 0112415707.

DNA Samples and Post-mortem done for the Inner-City fire victims

The Gauteng Department of Health can confirm that pathologist today (Sunday, 03 September) completed post-mortems for the 74 bodies at the Diepkloof Forensic Pathology Services mortuary including for the additional 3 who died in hospital following the fateful Johannesburg Inner-City fire incident.

The police have also drawn DNA samples from the 62 unidentifiable bodies with 13 Antemortem swabbing taken from families.

Antemortem samples are only being taken from the siblings or the parents of the deceased. Once the samples are taken from the deceased and the family members, they will be cross referenced to match them as part of linking families their deceased loved one.

To date, 69 families have presented at the facility to report their loved ones which has resulted in a line list of 69 names that possibly perished in the fire being developed. 10 families have identified their loved ones from the 12 identifiable

bodies and 7 have already been released to the families. Once the families conclude necessary processes and produce required identification documents the mortal remains are released to them for burial.

Government continues to urge family members of the 62 unidentifiable deceased bodies from the Johannesburg inner-city fire to present at the Gauteng Forensic Pathology Service mortuary in Diepkloof to assist with the process of identification.

Counselling and support Counselling services are provided on site at the Diepkloof government mortuary through the clergy and GDoH psychologists.

Meanwhile, only 31 people are still receiving care in hospital as at Sunday after 88 patients were seen at various health facilities since the horrific fire on 31 August. Sadly, three patients have since demised in hospital with



The Gauteng Faith Based Organisation together with the Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness and Convener of FBOs in Gauteng, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko held a prayer service for the victims and families of the Joburg inner city building fire.

[#AsibeHealthyGP](#)

the third death declared on Saturday (2 September) afternoon.

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Yet another milestone in Surgical marathons

A one-year-eight-months old bundle of joy will now not only be able to smile with confidence but grow up with a mouth that functions properly with low risk of acquiring infectious diseases.

This comes after the little one underwent cleft lip and cleft palate surgery at Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Tshwane on Tuesday, 29 August 2023 as part of the second surgical marathons conducted by 23 Gauteng public hospitals.

Cleft palate is a common birth condition where the roof of the mouth does not join properly during birth, while cleft lip is a birth condition where the tissue that makes up the lip does not join completely before birth. This abnormality affects speaking and feeding. However, this critical surgery restores normal function with minimal scarring.

The toddler will also grow up with the support of speech and language therapists accessible across Gauteng hospitals. This will help correct speaking difficulties.

A total of 358 surgical procedures were conducted on patients who are on waiting lists for elective surgeries which include arthroplasty, hernia repair, maxillofacial, hysterectomy and cataract excision



were performed across the 23 Gauteng hospitals, exceeding the set target of 300.

The patients were chosen according to surgical backlog lists at every hospital, which incorporates waiting time and prioritisation according to clinical needs. The impact of this project is greater than just reducing the surgical backlogs. The greater impact is on the patients who will now have functionality restored because they have had challenges with their eyesight due to cataracts or challenges with mobility due to severe knee and hip osteoarthritis. These individuals will now be able to do the things they love, see their loved ones properly and experience a new reality. Surgical backlogs are a moving target as new cases get added to the waiting list while facilities deal with the backlog of patients awaiting surgery.

The introduction of the surgical marathons is

enabling the Gauteng Department of Health to continuously work towards decreasing waiting list of elective surgeries on a large scale. Gauteng hospitals will also continue to employ “surgical blitz” on weekends as an ongoing strategy to reduce waiting times for patients.

“I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the clinicians and their respective teams who continue to make positive change in the lives of patients undergoing these surgeries. We are truly grateful of the many teams in our hospitals who continue to break boundaries and are committed to the course as we started on Nelson Mandela Day this year with our intense surgical marathons. “All our teams which include specialist, registrars, medical officers, scrub nurses and other support staff are all vital in making these operations a success,” said MEC for Health and Wellness Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Oral health hygiene intensified to reduce gum diseases

Koketso Maraba

Public education on oral health is being intensified in Gauteng to reduce gum diseases which have been linked to coronary heart disease, adverse pregnancy outcomes and diabetes.

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) on Friday (01 September) kick-started the month-long awareness campaign on oral health hygiene at the Saul Tsotetsi Sports Complex in Sebokeng.

Oral Health Month is observed every year in September to raise awareness on dental health issues, particularly the two most common health problems that affect the mouth which include cavities and gum disease.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko urged community members in attendance to take advantage of the oral health services the GDoH offers at primary healthcare facilities, intended to get to the root cause of any oral and dental pain or discomfort they are experiencing.

“Our department is committed to providing oral health services to a substantial population of approximately 9.8 million uninsured individuals spread across five health districts, which also



includes correctional services health facilities,” said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Marriam Mokoena, a resident from Sebokeng said her visit to the sports centre that morning was to consult with a dentist about her dentures as she had previously broken her lower jaw dentures. The dentist was able to give her information on how Sebokeng Hospital would assist her in getting a new pair of dentures as a pensioner.

“I had to seize this opportunity and enquire about my dentition issue and how much braces cost at public facilities. So, the dentist I spoke to was very helpful and explained what the process is to acquire the braces as I need to fix my teeth,” said Phindile Ngubane, another community member from Sebokeng.

It is in the best interest of the public to practice good oral hygiene. Not only does it ensure a beautiful smile, but it is good for your health. Oral health also plays an integral part in the general health and overall wellbeing of children as well. Good oral health care habits should begin at birth.

Throughout the month of September, the GDoH will undertake a series of oral health awareness campaigns across the province and open a dental health clinic in Soweto.

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~MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.*

Integration of traditional and conventional medicine part of comprehensive healthcare

Koketso Maraba

The Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko has called for the integration of traditional and conventional medicine in order to give patients comprehensive healthcare solutions.

The MEC stated this during the commemoration of the African Traditional Medicine Week at Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve on Thursday (31 August). African Traditional Medicine Week is commemorated between 26 to 31 August as part of efforts to integrate the use of indigenous herbalism with modern medications.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko pointed out that modern medicine excels in acute treatments and technological advancements, while traditional medicine offers profound insights into preventive care, mental wellness, and spiritual resilience.

In the efforts to create a holistic healthcare system accessible to patients, Health Minister Joe Phaahla has also acknowledged traditional healthcare practitioners as healers and has since created an environment that validates traditional healing practices within the broader healthcare framework.



This year, African Traditional Medicine Week is celebrated under the theme “Contribution of African Traditional Medicine to Holistic Health and Well-being for All.”

“It embraces the intricate connections between our physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions, intricately intertwined with the environment we inhabit. African Traditional Medicine, steeped in this holistic wisdom, provides a foundation for well-being that has been nurtured across generations,” said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Nombuso Shezi, a traditional healer from Vosloorus gave insight into how to use the gum tree herb as she always prescribes it to patients with a common cold or flu. She said the best way to use the plant is to boil it in hot water and steam your whole body with it to reduce fever.

Royal Leaders Of South Africa (RLOSA) Gauteng Chairperson, Themba Mgiba said the organisation is in talks with the government on attaining land for planting herbs to be used by traditional healers to expand their practices.

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~ MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Mr Mgiba, also mentioned that traditional healers are encouraged to work closely with healthcare facilities and play their part in motivating their patients to refrain from defaulting on their chronic medication and seek medical attention when their symptoms persist after their treatment.

Gauteng Health maintains Unqualified Audit Opinion

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) continues to take steps to improve its audit outcomes by enhancing internal controls on assets and the reduction of fruitless and wasteful expenditure. The Department is also making strides to improve its revenue collection to enable it to sustain and expand its services.

This is confirmed by the recent audit outcomes released by the office of the Auditor General of South Africa which confirmed that “the overall audit outcome of the department is unqualified with findings, for the 2022/2023 financial.

The GDoH was handed a certificate of recognition by Premier Panyaza Lesufi at the Gauteng Provincial Government’s award ceremony hosted Wednesday, 30 August 2023.

This was to recognise the improved audit performance of GPG departments and agencies in the 2022/2023 financial year. The results have shown a marked improvement in the financial management of public funds and elimination of wasteful expenditure.



The department has come a long way to reach a point of stability. While we have maintained the unqualified audit opinion, this serves only to lay a firm foundation for us to work towards a clean audit outcome. I want to commend the head of department and the entire team Gauteng Health for the work they have been doing to stabilise the department.”
~ MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Amongst the measures taken by the Department to improve the audit outcomes includes:

- Strengthening governance systems to ensure that there is greater accountability on how the limited state resources are used.
- Strengthening and improving processes by implementing clear and tighter internal control on all risk areas (e.g. SCM).
- Improving ethical behaviour by ensuring

that senior managers including supply chain management and human resource officials undergo vetting.

- Strengthening consequence management to hold employees accountable.
- The roll out of the Health Information System which will results in the following efficiencies; improved patients records, better queue management, and improved revenue collection.
- Reduction of medico legal claims through mediation and verification of claims before writs and court orders.
- Reduction of accruals through improved internal control on supply chain management

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Gauteng committed to improving maternal, neonatal and child health

Nomagugu Hloma

Continuous measures are being taken to improve maternal, neonatal and child health in Gauteng health facilities.

These efforts were intensified during the 10th annual Midwives, Obstetrics, Neonatal, and Child-Health Conference (MONEC) that was held between 29 - 31 August 2023 at the Centenary Hall in Mogale City, West Rand.

Held under the theme: "Together Again from Evidence to Reality; Celebrating a Decade of MONEC in Gauteng", the conference aimed at sharing sobering insights into the enhancement of midwifery practices and patient care which will result in reduced maternal mortality.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko said mothers face unexpected health challenges during a period that should be marked by joy and anticipation due to non-pregnancy related infections which stand as the leading cause of maternal mortality, claiming 25.7% of lives.

"Hypertension, affecting 22.3% of maternal deaths, serves as a stark reminder of the intricate interplay between maternal health and the health of the unborn child. The complications arising from hypertension brings into sharp focus the need for vigilant care and comprehensive support.

"Medical and surgical disorders, contributing

to 17.5% of maternal deaths, highlight the unpredictable nature of pregnancy. We must be equipped not only to celebrate the triumphs but also to navigate the complexities that can arise. Obstetric haemorrhage, accounting for 16.3% of maternal deaths, emphasizes the critical importance of rapid and effective emergency response. In these critical moments, timely action can make a lifesaving difference," pointed MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

To show its commitment to enhance maternal health and reduce the alarming rates of maternal deaths attributed to postpartum hemorrhage during caesarean deliveries, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) will be initiating a readiness survey across hospitals.

The survey aims to assess and ensure the capacity of healthcare facilities to perform safe caesarean deliveries. This is by addressing the crucial factor of surgical skills and preparedness, we are actively working to mitigate the risk of postpartum hemorrhage and its devastating consequences.

In addition, the MEC said that the GDoH recognises the critical role that accessible and accurate obstetric care plays in ensuring healthy pregnancies and deliveries.

"We are embarking on a comprehensive expansion of the Limited Obstetric Ultrasound Outreach Programme across the province. The significance of ultrasounds in providing precise diagnostics and informed decision-making cannot be overstated. Through this expansion, we are striving to empower expectant mothers with the information they need to make the best choices for their health and the health of their babies," added the MEC.

MONEC was attended by midwives and obstetrician representing all Gauteng hospitals. The gathering allowed these professionals to deliberate and share evidence-based practices and innovative interventions to implement across facilities to improve patient care.

Stage set for the realization of an integrated, responsive, health care system

Dr Adiel Chikobvu

In recent times, the National Assembly passed the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill in a move viewed as a positive step for advancing comprehensive access to quality, efficient and equitable health care for all in South Africa, as part of attaining Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

This adoption sets the stage for the realization of an integrated responsive health care system that is people-centred and comes with the opportunity to reconfigure the health system financing mechanism and transform health service delivery and management.

The reorganisation of the current health care system creates an opportunity to address barriers to access and quality as well as address structural changes that are apparent in both the public and private health care sectors. The challenges facing our health care sector were accentuated when public hearings were held in all nine provinces from 26 October 2019 to 24 February 2020 during which the majority



of South Africans voiced their overwhelming support for UHC.

The NHI Bill is currently being debated in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) through the Select Committee on Health and Social Services. As part of that NCOP legislative process, the National Department of Health briefed the Gauteng Legislature's Health and Wellness Portfolio Committee on 22nd August 2023 on the Bill. And this was followed by an assessment of how the NHI Bill would affect the population in the province of Gauteng by the Gauteng Department of Health & Wellness.

As a result, the Health Portfolio Committee has since scheduled public hearings as follows:

- ROUND 1 (Sedibeng & West Rand); Date: Tuesday, 08 September 2023; Time: 10h00 – 13h00 at Saul Tsotetsi ports Complex,
- ROUND 2 (Ekurhuleni & Tshwane); Date: Friday, 14 September 2023; Time: 10h00 – 13h00 at Tshepo Themba Multipurpose Resource Centre

- ROUND 3 (City of Johannesburg); Date: Thursday, 21 September 2023; Time: 10h00 – 13h00 at Brixton Multipurpose Centre.
- As the NCOP Committee may at the same time, publish the Bill for public comments for a period determined by the Committee; the public and interested stakeholders have had a 2-week extension to make written submissions on the Bill, i.e., until 15 September 2023. The Bill will be considered by each of the nine provincial legislatures (members of the NCOP Committee are required to go back to their provinces so they participate in the debate of their own Provincial Legislatures).
- Gauteng Department of Health affirms its conviction that the envisaged NHI Act will form a firm basis for the realisation of Universal Health Coverage and the Constitutional ideals enshrined in the Bill of Rights.
- *Dr Chikobvu is a health economist within the Gauteng Health Department.

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~ Dr Chikobvu



Good oral health care habits to maintain a healthy body.

These habits include:

- Balanced nutritional diet
- Exercise
- Adequate sleep
- Brushing and flossing teeth
- Rinse or gargle mouth with warm salt water or mouth wash
- Avoiding sweetened food and drinks
- Eating fruits and vegetables

Visit your nearest clinic or CHC for a dental check up every six months.



Patient grateful for pleasant stay at Bheki Mlangeni

I would like to thank all the staff at Bheki Mlangeni hospital in surgical ward A. Much as I was in pain you made my stay there bearable. I never saw the “ama nurse ayadelela thing”. The ward was always clean and the nurses jump every time you call.

@Mbali Betty

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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