



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**

HEALTH

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **BHEKI MLANGENI HOSPITAL TO HAVE A DEDICATED PSYCHIATRY WARD AS RESPONSE TO HIGH DEMAND FOR MENTAL HEALTHCARE**

In a bid to address the high demand for mental health care services at the Bheki Mlangeni District Hospital, in Soweto, the Gauteng Department of Health is converting a section of the facility into a dedicated 14-bedded psychiatry ward.

Between January 2020 and August 2021, the hospital admitted a total of 2319 mental healthcare patients. The number of patients admitted for mental care varies from month to month.

In October 2020 the hospital saw the highest number of patients admitted in a month, with 205 persons presenting with mental care condition.

For 2021 the highest number of mental health patients presenting in a single month was in January with 224 mental health care users.

The accident and emergency unit is always overflowing with patients due to unavailability of beds due to high demand for mental health care.

The Bheki Mlangeni District Hospital does not have a dedicated psychiatry ward due to its classification as level 1 facility. The current hospital district mental health care services package allows for 72-hour observation, which depending on a level of care needed, patients are referred to either regional or tertiary hospital.

From the regional or tertiary hospital, patients are referred to specialised psychiatry hospitals namely: Sterkfontein, Weskoppies and Tara.

The hospital currently has space for 26 mental health patients, which caters for 14 male and 12 female patients.

We wish to emphasize that mental health patients are only placed in other wards only when they need treatment for another condition, in addition to mental health care.

Owing to their condition, some mental care patients tend to display an aggressive behaviour towards staff and other patients.

Between January 2020 and August 2021, a total of 30 mental patients and nine staff members were attacked by mental healthcare patients.

Security is always placed in sections with mental healthcare patients. The department is confident that in addition to security measures in place, this intervention will help relieve pressure in other wards.

**Ends/**

**Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health**

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