

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2736**

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**Ms M D Hlengwa (IFP) to ask the Minister of Health:**

- (1) What interventions has his department assisted with at the Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital in the Northern Cape, in view of some of the recent reports of the specified hospital having lost several medical officers in 2021;
- (2) whether he has found that the administrative issues at the hospital have had any impact on the surgery backlog; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether he will commit to investigating the challenges faced by the hospital; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**NW3251E**

**REPLY:**

- (1) The following interventions are made to assist the Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital:
  - (a) The hospital has an annual turnover of about 30 – 50 community service doctors;
    - (b) The hospital annually plans by commencing interviews with community service doctors who may be interested to continue working at the hospital around June – July;
    - (c) The hospital has completed the human resources process on time and the applicants were informed of the outcome of the interviews and the list of recommended applicants has been sent to the Head of Units;
    - (d) The hospital is currently filling 31 posts, following a resignation of a medical officers.
- (2) Yes.
  - (a) The hospital always had backlogs in ophthalmology, general surgery, and orthopaedics. This is due to an ongoing challenge of a shortage of nurses trained in theatre technique. The hospital does, from time to time, arrange blitz sessions to reduce the backlog;
  - (b) The total backlog for general surgery currently stands at 492;

- (c) The long-term plan is active recruitment, coupled with training nurses in theatre technique to cover the rest of the province. This will allow the hospital to plan outreach programmes into the districts to minimise the burden on the tertiary hospital for beds.
- (3) The Ministry and National Department of Health will continue to support the province as we do with us provinces in the identified area of staff shortages across all categories.

END.