



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 2023

GAUTENG HEALTH TAKE STEPS TO INCREASE SAFETY OF ITS STAFF WHEN LOOKING AFTER PATIENTS

The Gauteng Department of Health continues to put measures in place to empower healthcare workers on how to respond to incidents of attacks on staff at health facilities.

Responding to questions at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature on incidents of attacks at facilities, MEC for Health and Wellness Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko said most of the 61 incidents that took place between January 2022 to date are attributed to mental healthcare users, while others relate to anger towards staff for various reasons such as refusal to buy them items or patient trying to escape, angry relatives and patients linked to criminal activities.

The attacks range from incidents where staff members were bitten, punched, hit on the face, robbed or assaulted. These led to patients either being sedated, restrained, transferred to other wards or facilities or being secluded and in some instances cases being opened with the police.

Majority of the incidents happened at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital (21), Carletonville Hospital (9) and Far East Rand Hospital (9), Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital (7), Thelle Mogoerane Hospital (4) Kopanong Hospital (3), with other facilities accounting for less or no incidents.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko explained that the Department continues to take measures to equip staff to deal with incidents of attack and to also reduce such. The measures include:

- Training of staff on responding to aggression violence in the affected institutions and other facilities.
- Improve the profiling of patients so that attending staff members have access to patient history and are fully aware of other underlying conditions.
- Continuous psychological and emotional support and counselling to staff.
- Staff advised to always follow Standard Operating Procedures when attending to patients.
- Staff encouraged to report all incidents to Occupation Health and Safety officers.
- Implementation of existing Gauteng Department of Health and SAPS Memorandum of Understanding.
- Continuous education of patients and their relatives on the treatment procedures to ensure greater cooperation.
- Installation of CCTV cameras at strategic location for monitoring purposes.

“Our goal is to minimise if not eradicate such incidents in our facilities. We have to work with healthcare workers and other stakeholders such as hospital boards, clinic committees and the patients themselves to curb incidents of attacks inside our facilities. The safety of our staff including patients remains a priority,” assured MEC Nkomo – Ralehoko.

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Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health

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