

MEDIA RELEASE	Tembisa Hospital: PSA extremely concerned about near-collapse
DATE	3 December 2024
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing a significant number of employees at Tembisa Hospital in Gauteng, is extremely concerned about the dire state of the hospital's infrastructure, a shortage of essential resources, and unsafe working conditions.

Tembisa Hospital is in a critical state of disrepair. Infrastructure has not been maintained or upgraded for decades. Cracked walls, leaking pipes, broken windows, and damaged doors that cannot lock are the norm. Equipment and documents are stored improperly. Dusty, disorganised stacks of paperwork highlight the lack of basic operational systems.

The PSA is particularly alarmed by security risks posed by these conditions. Psychiatric patients roam unsecured, whilst high-risk equipment, such as oxygen cylinders, is not locked away. This creates a hazardous environment for employees and patients, as these items could be misused as weapons.

The Hospital's casualty department is perpetually overcrowded, with patients waiting for days to receive care. Owing to a shortage of beds and consultation rooms, many patients are treated in corridors, are forced to sleep in wheelchairs, or even on the floor. These inhumane conditions place immense strain on healthcare professionals who are expected to deliver quality care without the necessary tools in an uncondusive work environment.

Failure by the Gauteng Department of Health to address these challenges has resulted in severe consequences for employees. Many employees are grappling with mental-health issues, including anxiety and depression, owing to the overwhelming work pressures. In the wake of major incidents gaining media attention, employees are often scapegoated as management deflects accountability.

The PSA urges the Gauteng Department of Health and relevant stakeholders to urgently address these issues. A comprehensive plan of action is needed to improve infrastructure, ensure adequate resources, and create a safe and functional environment for employees and patients. The PSA has formally requested the Department of Employment and Labour to conduct an in-depth inspection of the Hospital and issue recommendations for compliance with occupational health and safety standards. The PSA further urges national government to hold Hospital's management accountable for the years of neglect that have led to this crisis.

The PSA remains committed to advocating for the rights and safety of public-sector employees and ensuring that quality healthcare services are accessible to the public.

END