



FOR PSA MEMBERS: **EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – GQEBERHA AREA**

22-01-2025

Update: Eastern Cape Health Portfolio Committee visit

Members are provided with the following update from the recent Eastern Cape Health Portfolio Committee meeting, which took place at Uitenhage Provincial Hospital on 16 January 2025.

Lengthy meeting with critical discussions

The meeting, which extended over six hours, addressed ongoing challenges at health facilities in the Nelson Mandela Metro. Owing to the volume of issues raised, the meeting had to be adjourned and continued the next day.

Key concerns raised

Unions, councilors, and other stakeholders brought forward urgent issues, including:

- **Staff shortages:** Overworked staff are bearing the brunt of vacant positions, leading to exhaustion.
- **Safety and security:** Facilities remain unfenced, and some lack 24/7 security guards, leaving staff and the public vulnerable to robberies and shootings.
- **Patient service issues:** Patients are forced to arrive at clinics during the early hours of the morning, only to endure long waits for medical attention.
- **Bed shortages:** Despite this, some wards remain underutilised.
- **Leadership instability:** The unexplained removal of Uitenhage Hospital CEO, Mr Khaya Mbewu, added to concerns.

Plans and commitments

The Portfolio Committee, led by Chairperson, Ms Koliswa Vimbayo, accompanied by Eastern Cape Health MEC, Ms Ntandokazi Capa, along with MPLs from various parties, sought accountability and progress reports from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan District Management Team.

Key commitments made include:

- **Addressing staff shortages:** A post-to-person audit will begin at the District Office and extend to all facilities, ensuring proper allocation of staff.
- **Decentralising chronic medication:** To ease clinic congestion, chronic medication will be dispensed at alternative locations such as community halls and churches.

- **Resolving leadership matters:** The District Manager will engage with her team to finalise the return of Mr Mbewu as Hospital CEO.

The District Office has been given two weeks to execute these plans and report back to the Portfolio Committee.

Encouraging accountability

The meeting ended on a positive note, with the Portfolio Committee emphasising the importance of keeping labour informed and holding the District Office accountable. The PSA will closely monitor these developments and keep members updated on progress. Thank you for your ongoing dedication to ensuring better conditions for both workers and the public.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER