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Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement  
Western Cape Provincial Parliament  
IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Health on the Annual Report of the Department of Health  
for the 2021/22 financial year**

The Standing Committee on Health, having deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Health for the year ended 31 March 2022, reports as follows:

## **1. Introduction**

The Standing Committee's Annual Report meeting was published in newspapers inviting stakeholders and members of the public to attend and participate in the discussions.

The Standing Committee on Health (the Committee) deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Health on 25 October 2022, as part of its oversight function. The Minister and the Head of Department were allowed to make opening remarks.

The Department was examined on:

Part A: General Information,

Part B: Departmental Performance Information; and

Part D: Human Resources Management of the Department's Annual Report.

The Committee gave members of the public an opportunity to give input during the meeting. No members of the public were present, and no input was received.

## **2. Overview**

The Minister of Health, Prof. N Mbombo, provided an overview of the successes and challenges faced by the Department during the 2021/22 financial year.

The Minister reported that the period under review has been challenging for the Department of Health with the COVID-19 second wave claiming more lives including those of 150 healthcare workers. She indicated that for health workers, COVID-19 presented a dual challenge, they had to deal with moral injury and burnout as they faced unprecedented workloads. At the same time, healthcare workers had to deal with the personal risk of contracting COVID-19. Despite the risk, the health workers rose to meet the challenge, to care for those who needed it most, to manage COVID-19, and to manage routine service. The Minister reported that the Department has taken every step to ensure that healthcare workers are protected, and the healthcare system is adequately capacitated. The Department has done this by extending contracts for the most critical post.

The Minister highlighted that when access to the vaccine as an effective intervention against COVID-19 was found, she encouraged all healthcare workers to vaccinate to protect themselves, the people they are working with, and their loved ones. She started a roadshow to engage all healthcare workers including Traditional Health Practitioners and the complementary medicine group of practitioners which included Acupuncture, Therapeutics, Physiotherapy, Naturopathy, Therapeutic Massage, and Homeopathy as per the Allied Health Professions Councils Act of South Africa.

According to Minister Mbombo, the largest vaccination programme in the country was launched in Khayelitsha on 17 February 2021. The Department prioritised vaccines to ensure that the third wave would not be as fatal as the first and second waves. The Department has done its best during the pandemic to save lives and created a balance between COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 services to be delivered and parallel to that, the Department continued vaccinating. Furthermore, she mentioned that to accommodate the demands placed on the health system by the COVID-19 pandemic, other health services had to be de-escalated both on the Primary Health Care platform and in the acute hospital platform. In mitigating the impact of the de-escalation of services, the Department launched iBALANSI, Health Care Services and vaccination campaign, a registration drive for persons older than

60 years. The Department also opened two biggest vaccination sites in the province which were at Cape Town International Convention Centre and Athlone Stadium which also had a drive-through. The Minister also launched the #JobsB4Jol campaign, which was aimed at young people, calling youth to get vaccinated before socialising. The Minister also focused on vaccination amongst vulnerable groups including sex workers, farmworkers, and street dwellers to aid the drive to avail vaccines to everyone. The Department also participated in the Presidential Vooma vaccination campaign and was awarded for being one of the top performers in terms of vaccinations. By November 2021, Western Cape had administered 4 million COVID-19 vaccines to the citizens of the province.

Dr. Cloete, the Head of the Department, also made opening remarks. He indicated that during the year under review, the Department faced two hard-hitting COVID-19 waves, and healthcare workers were faced with the challenge of returning to routine clinical services and were on the precipice of the largest vaccine campaign in the history of South Africa while anticipating further COVID-19 waves and the risk this posed to healthcare workers and patients. The HOD highlighted that in February 2021, health workers received their COVID-19 vaccine doses. The vaccination programme was opened to the public a few months later and to date, millions of vaccines have been given as part of this programme. He reported that by March 2021, the Department administered 4 777 458 primary series vaccines and 470 266 boosters and additional doses.

The HOD reported that during the financial year under review, the healthcare workers demonstrated resilience, character, and tenacity. The Department plan to use all the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic as a springboard to transform the provincial Department of Health. Furthermore, the Department has developed a Resurgence, Recovery, and Reset Strategy to transform the health service platform into a system that is people-centric, trusted, and equitable and one that optimally meets the health and wellness needs of the population.

### **3. Key points from the discussion on the Annual Report of the Department**

- 3.1** The Western Cape population for 2021/2022 was estimated at 7.1 million, with 74.9 percent of the population served by public health services.
- 3.2** During the 2021/22 financial year, the Department had 33 612 employees, 65% were health professionals, 35% were administrative support staff, and 88% were permanently employed.
- 3.3** The Department reported that women made up 72% of all employees with 56% of senior management positions being held by women.
- 3.4** In terms of race, the department reported that 37% of its employees were Black, 12% were White, 49% were Coloured and 2% were Indian.
- 3.5** During the financial year under review, 1618 employees resigned from the Department due to various reasons such as better remuneration, emigration, bad health, age, misconduct, and other occupation.
- 3.6** During the 2021/22 financial year, 108, 570 learners were seen through the Integrated School Health Programme.
- 3.7** It was reported that 2 958,568 medicine parcels were distributed via the Chronic Dispensing Unit.
- 3.8** The Department reported that there were 7,441,782 contacts in home and community-based care settings.
- 3.9** In 2021/2022, the Department made reasonably good progress to improve infrastructure that supports the Department's health care.
- 3.10** During the period under review, the Department collected a revenue surplus of R29, 627 million through patient fees and tariffs charged as per Uniform Patient Fees Scheduled.
- 3.11** In 2021/2022, the Department recorded an under-expenditure of R273, 909 million. The underspent was due to the management sub-programme that can be attributed to savings

under the COVID-19 funds due to a less severe 4<sup>th</sup> wave than anticipated reduced levels of testing as well as a reduction in the price of COVID-19 tests.

- 3.12** During the financial year under review, the scope of the Tygerberg Hospital Redevelopment Project changed due to the finalization of the clinical brief for the Belhar Regional Hospital. It was reported that the total number of beds was reduced from 110 to 839 and this has required a review and an update of the feasibility study which will be submitted to the National Treasury and the National Department of Health in 2022/2023.
- 3.13** The Department reported that the successful mitigation strategy of contracting private providers related to the increased demand for inter-facility services during the COVID-19 surge period had come to a planned ending due to the end of the financial year as well as the lifting of the national state disaster.
- 3.14** In response to COVID-19, a mass fatality centre was established to manage the number of fatalities and admitted 2101 cases. However, the facility closed and was subsequently de-commissioned in October 2021.
- 3.15** It was reported that there are 28 Intermediate Care facilities in the province which equates to 846 beds, of which 78 percent are found in the Metro.
- 3.16** The Department reported that the province has 33 District Hospitals with 3,067 beds. In the year under review, there were 275,168 inpatient separations, 636 350 outpatients seen, and 621, 561 emergency cases in District Hospitals.
- 3.17** In the 2021/2022 financial year, there were 983 TB beds available across the province and 4,555 inpatients separations, and 2,120 outpatients seen in Specialised Hospitals. In addition, there were 6,364 inpatient separations and 29, 686 outpatients seen across Psychiatric Hospitals. The Psychiatric Hospital platform has 1,827 beds.
- 3.18** During the financial year under review, 200 Primary Care facilities achieved Ideal Clinic Status. The percentage of facilities that achieved Ideal Clinic Status out of those who participated in the programme is 78%, compared to the 53 % achievement in 2021/2022.
- 3.19** The Department reported an increase in deaths of children under 5 years during the financial year under review, due to pneumonia and severe acute malnutrition.
- 3.20** During the financial year under review, the bed utilization rate increased due to worsening circumstances patients are presenting with more severe diseases requiring a longer hospital stay and because of adverse home circumstances, patients' discharge is often further delayed.
- 3.21** The Department reported that staff safety has escalated to become one of the uppermost challenges during COVID-19. This includes infection by COVID-19 as well as other risks such as violence and crime in communities.
- 3.22** The Committee raised a concern regarding the lack of people living with disabilities in the senior management position. The Department indicated that employees do not divulge their disabilities, they keep it a secret, and this makes it difficult for the Department to meet employment equity.

#### **4. Public input**

The Committee proceeded to the public hearing on the Annual Report of the Department of Health. Ms Kiewiets, from Cape Metro Health Forum, Mr Carlson, Mr Sylvester, Ms Mbombo and Ms Daniels made submissions on the Annual Report of the Department of Health. The Department responded to the input made by members of the public.

#### **5. Information requested**

The Committee requested the Department of Health provides it with the following information by Friday, 9 December 2022:

- 5.1 Information on the Wall of Remembrance, what are the plans for the fallen health workers that died during the pandemic.
- 5.2 Detailed information on the number of ambulances allocated per district.
- 5.3 A funding model for District and Regional Hospitals in the province and reasons why it was not feasible for the Khayelitsha District Hospital to be converted to a Regional Hospital.
- 5.4 A list of Clinics that received secured waiting areas, and list of Clinics that are on the waiting list to receive the waiting rooms.
- 5.5 The Department's employee retention strategy to address the high resignations of employees from the Department.
- 5.6 Reasons for the high mortality rate for children under 5 years and strategies in place to mitigate and prevent further deaths.
- 5.7 Detailed information on the plans in place to address the challenges in Khayelitsha District Hospital, specifically, the shortage of bed space, mental health, and shortage of staff.
- 5.8 Detailed information on the Community Base Approach in terms of remuneration and stability in the sector. In addition, the Committee requests the progress made on the negotiations to absorb the Home Base Care Workers into the Department.

## 6. Conclusion

The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Committee, the Minister, the Head of Department and all the officials of the Department for their preparation and responses to the questions posed by the Committee.



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**MS WF KAIZER-PHILANDER, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH**  
**WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**  
**DATE:**