



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

WCPP: 11/4/9

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Report of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness on its oversight visit to the Paarl Provincial Hospital on 5 May 2023**

The Standing Committee on Health and Wellness having conducted an oversight visit to the Paarl Provincial Hospital on 5 May 2023, reports as follows:

### **The delegation**

The delegation included the following Members:

#### **Democratic Alliance**

Pretorius, G (Chairperson)

Plato, D

#### **African National Congress**

Baku-Baku-Vos, NG

Windvogel, R

#### **Economic Freedom Fighters**

Klaas, TM

### **1. Background**

The Standing Committee on Health and Wellness conducted an oversight visit to the Paarl Provincial Hospital on Friday 5 May 2023.

This visit was a follow-up to the visit conducted by the Committee in November 2022. The Committee resolved to conduct the visit after receiving complaints about poor customer service at the Paarl Provincial Hospital. The complaints were predominantly about the poor service in the Hospital's Emergency Centre. Unfortunately, some of the questions posed by the Committee during its previous visit were not fully answered by the officials who were present during the visit.

The Committee also wanted to engage the management of the hospital on the challenges that were reported and noted during the previous unannounced visit. In addition, The Committee visited the facility to assess the service pressure and the capacity of the hospital. The Committee also visited the facility to understand better the reported challenges in the Emergency Centre (EC) of the Hospital.

### **2. Salient points that emanated from the visit to the Paarl Provincial Hospital**

Dr F van der Watt, the Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital, Dr, S Fourie, the Manager of Medical Services, and Mr S Brulners, the Deputy Director of Nursing, welcomed the Committee and accompanied them on a walkabout of the facility regarding the service pressure areas. They also briefed the Committee on the services offered and the challenges of the hospital.

Dr van der Watt gave a brief history of the Hospital. He reported that the hospital was a referral general specialist hospital for the West Coast, the Cape Winelands' Districts, and a District Hospital for the Drakenstein sub-district. The 331-bed facility caters for the medical needs of a vast geographical area of approximately 22 500 square kilometers and a population of over 1 000 000 citizens. The bed allocation to the Emergency Centre was 250 beds. It was reported that at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, 54 additional beds were added and that took the total bed number to 385.

It was reported that Stellenbosch, Malmesbury, Piketberg, Porterville, Citrusdal, Clainwilliam, and Vredendal Hospitals were the drainage areas for the Paarl Provincial Hospital. The services provided at the Paarl Provincial Hospital include Emergency Medicine; Internal Medicine; High Care; Dermatology; General Surgery; Urology; Ophthalmology; ENT surgery; Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Paediatrics and Neonatology; Orthopaedics; Psychiatry; Anaesthesiology; and Radiology services. In addition, the hospital provides clinical support services that include social work services; Radiography; Dietetics; Physiotherapy; Occupational Therapy; Audiology; and Pharmaceutical Services. Furthermore, the hospital provides outreach services by all the major disciplines to District Hospitals in the region.

The Committee was informed that the Paarl Provincial Hospital was the only public health facility open after 16h00 in the Drakenstein sub-district with more than 530 000 citizens. The total number of personnel for the hospital is 787. The medical unit has 97 full-time doctors, the nursing component consists of 376 nurses and 93 administrative staff. Others are allied workers and general staff members. The hospital has maintained an average staff fill rate of 96%, funded for 95.8% of posts. It was reported that the staff turnover was very low at the Hospital, around 2%. The queue marshals for day shifts were reported to be funded by the hospital board and there are no queue marshals for the evening shift. The security guards assist with directing patients to the hospital's Emergency Centre.

The Committee was informed that the Hospital's Emergency Centre assists 150 patients per day although it was designed for 100-120 patients. The Emergency Centre provides services to approximately, 5 000 patients per month, and 30% of patients seen were green patients in terms of the Triage System. The green patients can be serviced in any health facility, however, because the hospital was the only health facility open after 16h00, people came to the hospital to seek help. The hospital has an 85% optimal bed occupancy rate. The average length of stay for patients was reported to be 3-4 days, however, psychiatric patients with complex conditions and pre-mature babies stay up to three weeks. The long admission of psychiatric patients contributes to bed shortages and bottlenecks in the Emergency Centre. The long-bed occupancy rate for the victims of sexual violence was reported. The Committee was informed that there were plans in place to create a Thuthuzela Centre for rape survivors and that would be a partnership involving the Department of Health and Wellness and the National Prosecuting Authority. It was reported that the hospital's death rate was stable due to the dedication and full commitment of staff.

The total budget of the Paarl Provincial Hospital for the 2023/24 financial year was R485 million assuming 5% inflation on the 2022/23 financial year budget of R467 million. The hospital should have received R500 million in the current financial year, however, there was a R15 million budget cut. About 70% of the budget was spent on employee compensation and 30% was spent on goods and services and on equipment. It was reported that R9 million came from the Road Accidents Fund (RAF) and the Department of Correctional Services. However, the Road Accident fund has not paid any funds to the Hospital in the current financial year.

Some of the challenges that were reported during the visit include load-shedding. It was reported that stage 6 means that the hospital does not have electricity for 12 hours. The hospital has two generators, the primary and backup generators. They need 2.5 litres of oil and diesel every two hours. The cost for diesel was reported to be R40 000 per day during stage 6 load-shedding. The generator malfunction was reported to be causing clinical risk at the Hospital. It was reported that the available generators only cover high-risk areas. The load-shedding affects the daily operations of the hospital. The hospital's kitchen provides 1 200 to 1 500 meals per day for patients and during load-shedding, the service is negatively affected. The hospital's storeroom cannot place orders and it becomes a challenge for doctors to get equipment from the storeroom during load-shedding. The hospital needs to purchase 40 UPS', and the purchasing of theatre batteries and UPS' will cost the hospital R270

000.00. Damaged equipment because of load-shedding and staff burnout, especially in the hospital's workshop and kitchen were reported as major challenges.

The chute system at Paarl Provincial Hospital was broken and there was no funding for it. It was reported that the chillers at the hospital were broken and needed to be replaced. Delays were reported for the operating and gynae theatre room. Lifts replacement, the quality of service offered by the company that was replacing the lifts at the hospital was reported to be shocking. Generator breakdown was reported as a challenge; water leaks due to flooding were reported. The Committee was informed that the hospital spent approximately R200 000.00 to fix water leaks. Security challenges at the Hospital were highlighted, the hospital does not have electric fencing and it was needed because people steal from the hospital including copper. Access control was reported as a challenge.

It was reported that safety in the Emergency Centre was still a major challenge, however, after the previous Committee visit in November 2022, there were security improvements in place such as Cameras, a light, and a speaker at the entrance of the Emergency Centre. The Hector System that was reported in the previous visit has improved. The hospital has a dedicated staff for patients who fall under yellow in terms of the Triage System and a dedicated Clinical Nurse Practitioner has been assigned to attend to the green patients during the week to fast-track the long queue. The hospital has 16 trolleys in the Emergency Centre for green and yellow patients. Emergency discharge in the Emergency Centre and Psychiatric wards was highlighted to facilitate patient flow. The discharged patients are linked to community health centres or outpatient clinics. Factors such as population growth, migration, immigration, and falling out of medical aid were reported as the contributing factors behind the increase in the number of patients at the Paarl Provincial Hospital. The patient's transport was reported as a challenge.

The high-care unit ward at the Hospital has eight beds, however, due to the shortage of staff, the hospital only has two beds that were utilised in the high-care unit. In addition, the short-stay unit within the Emergency Centre has 12 beds, and only one nurse works in the ward. It was reported that due to the shortage of staff, the unit cannot fully function, and only six patients can be accommodated.

Mr. J Abraham, a member of the Hospital Board gave input during the visit. He reported that the Hospital Board was working with the hospital management to improve the quality of service offered by the Hospital. He indicated that the Board was funding the posts for the queue marshals in the Emergency Centre.

He mentioned that the TC Newman Community Day Care Centre operates on weekdays from Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays and the operating times were between 07h30 – 16h00. He indicated that the hospital closes early and the Department of Health and Wellness should consider extending the operating hours for the TC Newman Day Centre to close at midnight or to operate 24 hours. He further mentioned that the size of the Emergency Centre at the Paarl Provincial Hospital was small, and not adequate to accommodate the growing population. He suggested that the Department should consider making the Emergency Centre bigger, alternatively, get another space for the green patients and allow the Emergency Centre to only focus on the critical patients in red and yellow in terms of the Triage System. Furthermore, he reported that the hospital was getting bad reviews on social media because of the security services personnel who were alleged to be mistreating patients. He advised that the posters displaying Hospital Board Members must be visible and be placed at every entrance of the hospital to make it easy for the patients to report poor patient experiences to them if not to the management of the hospital.

Dr F van der Watt responded to the input made by the Board Member. He mentioned that complaints about security personnel at Paarl Provincial Hospital comes up often. He added that the hospital was not happy with DC Security Company and since they started, the hospital has penalised the company a tune of R500 000.00 for not meeting its contractual obligations. He reported that the hospital wants to terminate the contract and the matter was in court. Paarl Provincial Hospital requires additional Sisters to deal with the green patients. He indicated that capacity is the issue at the hospital's Emergency Centre. The hospital was dealing with a lack of resources and increasing demand for health services and resources were needed to address the challenges experienced by the Hospital.

## **2.1 Concerns**

The Committee raised concerns with

- 2.1.1 The lack of equity in the senior management of the hospital, and
- 2.1.2 The delayed payment by the Road Accident Fund to the Paarl Provincial Hospital.

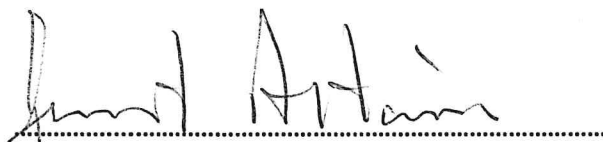
## **3. Recommendations**

The Committee recommended that,

- 3.1 the Department should investigate the possibility of converting the TC Newman Community Day Care Centre to a 24-hour health facility to alleviate the service pressure of the Paarl Provincial Hospital.
- 3.2 The Department should monitor the equity of the hospital's management in terms of race and gender.
- 3.3 The Committee recommended that the organogram of management at the Paarl Provincial Hospital should represent the region's demography.
- 3.4 The Department should engage the Road Accident Fund on the delayed payment for the Paarl Provincial Hospital.
- 3.5 The Minister of Health and Wellness should engage Eskom and apply for the load-shedding exemption for the Paarl Provincial Hospital.

The Committee commended the management of the hospital for its excellent upkeep and the way it was managed.

The Committee successfully concluded its visit to the Paarl Provincial Hospital.



**MR G PRETORIUS, MPP**  
**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS**  
**WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**