



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

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COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Health on the oversight visit to the Red Cross Children's Hospital on 16 September 2020

Report of the Standing Committee on Health on the oversight visit to the Red Cross Children's Hospital on 16 September 2020 as follows:

The Delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Health included the following Members:

Philander, WF (DA) (Chairperson and leader of the delegation)
Bosman, G (DA) (alternate)
Windvogel, R (ANC)

Additional Members

Bans, AP (ANC)

Apologies

Allen R (DA)
Botha, LJ (DA)
Xego, M (EFF)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:

Ms N Jamce

Background

The Standing Committee on Health conducted an oversight visit to the Red Cross Children's Hospital in Rondebosch. The aim of the visit was to assess services offered by the Red Cross Children's Hospital. The hospital also admits children from all over the country and from neighbouring countries. The Committee resolved to visit the Red Cross Children's Hospital as part of its programme for the 2020/2021 financial year. The Committee also visited the Red Cross Children's Hospital to assess the service pressure that the hospital was experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr Mukosi, the Chief Executive Officer for the Red Cross Children's Hospital, Dr Parbhoo, Manager for the Medical Services, and other senior managers of the hospital welcomed the standing committee and gave a brief summary of the services offered by the hospital, the service pressure, the challenges and the successes of the hospital.

1.1 Tour of the facilities

The Committee conducted a brief tour of the facility. The areas visited included the newly built emergency center, dialysis section, high care facility and burns unit.

1.2. Salient points that emanated from the oversight visit to the Red Cross Children's Hospital

- 1.2.1 The Committee was informed that the vision of the Red Cross Children's Hospital (the hospital) was "to be the leading specialised healthcare provider for Children in Africa."
- 1.2.2 It was reported that the Hospital provides an important service in the Western Cape, to other provinces, especially the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape, and other African countries. The hospital also plays a vital role as the 'end of the referral chain' for large areas of the country.
- 1.2.3 The hospital is a unique training facility for all categories of child health professionals to well establish academic links, namely, the University of Cape Town School of Child and Adolescent Health, University of the Western Cape Dental School and Allied Professions, University of Stellenbosch and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and others.

- 1.2.4 The hospital offers services such as medical, surgical, allied health services and unique single site services.
- 1.2.5 The Red Cross Children's Hospital was reported as the only dedicated paediatric hospital in South Africa that offers comprehensive paediatric services, quaternary (National centre for paediatric liver transplants), tertiary (Provincial centre for paediatric cardiac care) and secondary care for children.
- 1.2.6 It was reported that the hospital had 272 beds allocated, of which 22 were allocated to the ICU section, 19 490 admissions, 3 896 day patients, 73 856 inpatients, 7 250 operations, 118 325 for outpatient visits, 42 328 trauma & emergency patients and 51 500 allied health visits.
- 1.2.7 The key stakeholders of the hospital includes amongst others, the Children's Hospital Trust (CHT) an official fundraising arm of the hospital for capital works projects; RX Radio, a hospital radio station by children (patients) for children (patients); the Hospital Facility Board, an advisory board that accepts and administers donations and bequests on behalf of the hospital and raise funds for amenities for staff and patients; the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences, a part of the faculty's campus extends from the hospital which provides a platform for teaching in the hospital environment and ChildSafe that updates and analyses available statistics on accidental death and injuries.
- 1.2.8 It was reported that the Children's Hospital Trust was a major donor for the hospital and had contributed 50% towards the renovations and building of the new emergency centre and the other 50 % was funded by the provincial Department of Health.
- 1.2.9 The children's services that are offered by the Groote Schuur Hospital would be moved to the Red Cross Children's Hospital once the renovations for the section for clinical services are completed.
- 1.2.10 Due to the infrastructure challenges at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, the section for the mental health services was closed in 2019. It was reported that the services were offered offsite and the section was under renovation.
- 1.2.11 The Committee was informed that due to COVID-19, the ChildSafe NGO that works closely with the burns unit lost donors and the hospital had to accommodate the NGO within the hospital premises.
- 1.2.12 During the visit, the Committee was informed that there was no child protection unit within the hospital and once the renovations and the new building was completed, space will be assigned to the child protection services. The child protection services within the Red Cross Children's Hospital was a collaboration between the hospital and the Department of Social Development.
- 1.2.13 The extent of child abuse in communities was reported to be a major challenge. The hospital management suggested that the Department of Social Development should work closely with the Department of Health on child protection services and absorb the child protection unit to be one of the components of the Department of Social Development.
- 1.2.14 It was reported that some of the beds at the Red Cross Children's Hospital reserved for terminally ill children were occupied by abused children.

2. The impact of COVID-19 on the Red Cross Children's Hospital.

- 2.1 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Red Cross Children's Hospital had to reduce the number of entrances to the hospital to reduce the number of people entering the hospital and the pedestrian entrance has since been closed.
- 2.2 A queue marshal was placed at the entrance of the emergency centre to screen patients and families. The hospital had to limit the number of caregivers and visitors.
- 2.3 The social distancing at the hospital significantly reduced all elective surgery and outpatient appointments. The plan was to create capacity in order to free up staff to work in other areas

that have been created and to create additional capacity to take on additional paediatric patients from all over the province.

- 2.4 The Committee was informed that due to COVID-19, the hospital erected tents to create more physical space to separate possible COVID-19 patients from other patients with non-COVID-19 related illnesses.
- 2.5 The hospital continued with only urgent, emergency surgery and outpatient appointments.
- 2.6 The hospital was planning the re-escalation of services as there were backlogs in most services. It was reported that the hospital received donor funding to assist with catching-up on backlogs.
- 2.7 The Committee was informed that there were some positives for the hospital that came out of the COVID-19 era. The positives include stronger connections between different parts and departments within the hospital, connections between provincial networks, the public, and the City of Cape Town. The learning collaborations across the province, the Spacer project led by Prof Mike Levin. The spacer project has been rolled out to all facilities across the province (including adults), and Prof Levin was extending the project across South Africa.

3. The Committee noted the following challenges during the visit

- 3.1 Adolescent health services were reported as a gap within the health services.
- 3.2 The child and adolescent Psychiatry Unit had infrastructural issues, however, the issues were attended to and the unit was reopened.
- 3.3 There was an increasing need for additional theatre equipment.
- 3.4 The hospital reported an increase in the number of all types of child abuse.
- 3.5 Children with gunshot injuries were admitted to the hospital in alarming numbers.
- 3.6 The hospital reported that children awaiting placement by the Department of Social Development were blocking the acute beds at the hospital.
- 3.7 The hospital reported that road accidents were the major cause of mortalities amongst children and resources were needed for prevention.
- 3.8 The hospital reported that approximately 50% of children in the Western Cape died of injuries.

4 Request for Information

The Committee requested the Department of Health to provide it with a detailed report on its collaboration with the Department of Social Development on how both departments were dealing with cases of abused children that are admitted at the Red Cross Children's Hospital by Friday 30 October 2020.

5 Resolution

The Committee resolved to table a motion in the House to express its gratitude to the entire staff of the Red Cross Children's Hospital for their dedication to providing outstanding health services to the children of South Africa and beyond the South African borders. Furthermore, the motion will also highlight the excellent manner in which the Red Cross Children's Hospital was managed.



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MS WF PHILANDER, MPP
CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT