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

DRAFT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Health on the oversight visits to the Gouda Clinic in Drakenstein and Worcester Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Station in Worcester conducted on 2 September 2020

Report of the Standing Committee on Health on the oversight visits to the Gouda Clinic in Drakenstein and Worcester EMS station in Worcester conducted on 2 September 2020, reports 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)
Allen R (DA)
Botha, LJ (DA)
Makamba-Botya, (EFF)
Windvogel, R (ANC)

Additional Members

Bans, AP (ANC)
Bakubaku-Vos, NG (ANC)

Apology

Xego, M (EFF)

The following parliamentary official accompanied the delegation:

Ms N Jamce

Background

The Standing Committee on Health conducted unannounced oversight visits to the Gouda Clinic in Drakenstein and Worcester EMS station in Worcester. The visits aimed to assess services offered by the two facilities to their communities. The Committee resolved to visit the Gouda Clinic due to the challenge of lack of space that was reported. Also, the Committee decided to visit the EMS Station in Worcester to assess the service pressure that the station experienced.

1. Visit to the Gouda Clinic in Drakenstein

Sister Johannes, the Operations Manager at the Gouda Clinic welcomed the standing committee and gave a brief summary of the services offered by the facility, the service pressure, the challenges and the successes of the Gouda Clinic.

1.1 Tour of the facilities

The Committee conducted a brief tour of the facility. The areas visited included the waiting room outside the facility, the waiting room in the prefab structure, two consultation rooms and the pharmacy. The Committee also engaged with Mr Rens, a Councilor from the Drakenstein Municipality and Mr Roger, a community leader.

1.2. Salient points that emanated from the unannounced visit to the Gouda Clinic

- 1.2.1 The Gouda Clinic (Clinic) is a Primary Health Care facility that offers services such as mother and child health, chronic diseases care, women's health, HIV and TB care, men's health and acute services.
- 1.2.2 It was reported that the Clinic attends to about 50 patients per day. Patients who do not present serious illness are seen outside the facility or are given an appointment date. The

Clinic also refers patients to the Porterville and Paarl Hospitals depending on the seriousness of the illness.

- 1.2.3 The Clinic operates from a four room structure that is owned by the Drakenstein Municipality.
- 1.2.4 The Department of Health approved the project for the building of the new clinic four years ago, the land for the new site was identified, however, there has been delays in commencing with the building of the new clinic.
- 1.2.5 The Committee noted that office space was a major challenge at the Clinic, it was reported that patients queue outside the premises even during the winter season.
- 1.2.6 During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the screening of patients was conducted outside the facility due to the lack of testing and isolation rooms for patients that showed the COVID-19 symptoms.
- 1.2.7 Sister Johannes reported that the Clinic had a total of 41 COVID-19 positive cases, 40 have recovered and 1 positive case was still active.
- 1.2.8 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clinic introduced an appointment system with only critical patients allowed to visit the clinic without an appointment.
- 1.2.9 The clinic has a triage system for chronic patients, the unstable patients are seen by a doctor, and the other patients only visit the clinic by appointment to avoid the unnecessary exposure of staff and patients to the COVID-19.

1.3 Challenges

Councillor Rens and Mr Roger, a community leader highlighted the following challenges which were also noted by the Committee during the visit:

- 1.3.1 Space was noted as a major challenge at the Clinic. Patients queue outside the premises even in cold weather. This also poses a danger to women and children who have to queue outside the facility in the early hours of the morning.
- 1.3.2 A concern was raised that the Department of Health was not communicating with community members regarding the delays in building the new Gouda Clinic.
- 1.3.3 There was a shortage of staff in the facility, it has two nurses who rotate between the mobile clinic which serves the surrounding farms and the Gouda Clinic resulting in one sister on duty at the clinic. It was reported that in terms of the staffing plan, the clinic still needs three more nurses.
- 1.3.4 The ablution facility was reported as inadequate and a challenge at the clinic. There were two toilets in the facility, one for officials and the other one for patients. It was mentioned that both male and female staff share one toilet and the other toilet was utilised by both female and male patients.
- 1.3.5 It was reported that there was no ambulance service in Gouda. Patients with serious illnesses are referred to the Paarl and Porterville Hospitals. Patients have to wait outside the Gouda Clinic for the taxi service contracted by the Department of Health. The taxi service is responsible for transporting patients to and from the referral hospitals.

1.4 Recommendation

The Committee recommended that the Department should ensure that women and children that queue outside the facility in the early hours of the morning are safe.

1.5 Request for Information

The Committee requested the Department of Health to submit the following information by Friday 30 October 2020:

- 1.5.1 A progress report on the building of the new Gouda Clinic, the reasons for the delay of the project and timeframes for the building of the new Clinic.
- 1.5.2 A detailed information on the number of ambulances in the Drakenstein area, this information should clearly outline the areas that these ambulances are allocated to.

2. Visit to the Worcester EMS Station in Worcester

Mr. van Wyk, the EMS Station Manager, and Ms. Diaz, the Communication's Manager at the Worcester EMS welcomed the Committee and accompanied the delegation during the walkabout of the facility.

2.1 Salient points that emanated from the unannounced visit to the EMS Worcester Station

- 2.1.1 The Committee noted that the reception area of the EMS Worcester Station still displayed a picture frame of the former Premier of the Western Cape, Ms H Zille.
- 2.1.2 The delegation first visited the call centre section where emergency calls from various communities in the rural areas are received resulting in ambulances dispatched.
- 2.1.3 The Committee was informed that the EMS officials were sometimes attacked by criminals when responding to calls in various communities.
- 2.1.4 It was reported that the criminals in rural communities were targeting the new paperless tablet system that was installed in ambulances to capture patient's information before they arrive at hospital.
- 2.1.5 The Evian Park, Chicago, Zwelethemba, and Nduli townships were identified as the red zone areas. The EMS personnel are escorted by police when responding to calls from these areas.
- 2.1.6 The delegation was informed that the Department of Health has put measures in place to protect the EMS officials from the attacks, these include two panic buttons in the ambulance. If the officials press the panic button it reflects a call in distress in the call centre screen and police are informed immediately.
- 2.1.7 It was reported that the EMS officials are psychologically supported by the Department through an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and debriefing sessions. The EAP is managed by an independent service provider.
- 2.1.8 It was reported that the EMS Worcester Station was servicing the entire Cape Winelands District and the performance of EMS officials in Worcester was measured by their response times to the incoming calls, the dispatch time, and the time the ambulance arrives at the scene.
- 2.1.9 The Committee was informed that the Department has a contract with private taxis to transport the COVID-19 patients to and from the isolation sites.
- 2.1.10 During the visit, the Committee was informed that a new EMS Station in De Doorns will be opened soon, this would ease the workload of the Worcester EMS station.
- 2.1.11 It was reported that the EMS Worcester Station lost one official due to the COVID-19.
- 2.1.12 The success of the EMS Worcester station was due to the staff members who were working regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous attack of the EMS personnel by criminals in red zone areas. Management of the station also gives support to all its personnel.

2.2 Committee Resolutions

The Committee resolved to:

- 2.2.1 Table a motion to commend the officials of the Worcester EMS Station, and to pass the Committee's condolences to the family of the EMS staff member who passed away due to the COVID-19.
- 2.2.2 Conduct an oversight visit to the EMS Station in De Doorns.
- 2.2.3 Conduct an oversight visit to the Khayelitsha District Hospital.

2.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommended that the station removes the picture of former Premier, Ms H Zille and replace it with the incumbent Premier of the Province, Mr A Winde.

2.4 Request for Information

The Committee requests the Department of Health to submit a detailed report on the arrangement it has with private taxis. This information should include the Standard Operating Procedures and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the taxi mode of transport by Friday 30 October 2020.



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