

KZN Health MEC restores previously troubled CHC into a 24-hour facility

The once-troubled Ezakheni No 2 Clinic has been restored into operating as a 24 hour facility. The clinic is situated near a tavern.

Due to adverse incidents such as shootings, stabbings, assaults, damage to property and verbal abuse perpetrated against the clinic's staff members and health care users, KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, took a decision in 2014 to reduce the CHC's working hours from being open 24 hours a day to operating between 8am and 4pm.

This had far-reaching consequences for the local community who needed emergency medical attention, including that of a maternal nature.

In essence, there were a noticeable rising number of deaths especially on stab wound victims who would bleed to death whilst waiting for an ambulance to ferry them to St Chads Clinic, close to ten kilometres away.

Since the closure, there have been various emergencies that could not be attended to at night including:

- 15 Assaults
- 9 Gun shots;
- 17 Maternity cases including those born before arrivals;
- 7 Burns;
- 7 Snake bites and
- 2 Para-suicide cases

This CHC, which is regarded as a "mini-hospital", provides vital services to the community and is one of the busiest in uThukela District, attending to 25 322 cases per quarter, from a population of 34 097 in places like Ndaka; Steadville; Matiwane; Ezakheni, amongst others.

Today the MEC announced that the CHC would revert to operating as a 24 hour facility. An excited Dr Dhlomo said he was satisfied with a report from the health district management team on interventions that had helped improve the situation. He also thanked organised labour for propagating the safety of the Staff members and also giving support to the move to extend operating hours.

'This positive development is due to good cooperation of all the stakeholders including the Emnambithi Local Municipal Mayor; the Ward Councillors; South African Police Serves; Clinic Committee; St Chads management as well as the clinic staff.

We are happy that all the safety concerns that were raised have been attended to. We now have the CCTV Cameras installed; Panic Buttons in place; additional lighting provided and now just awaiting the announcement of the preferred service provider who would improve on the Perimeter Fencing as well as the Turnstile Gate,' said Dhlomo.

In the reopening ceremony, the Councillors announced that they will mobilise their communities to inform them of the availability of the service and also to implore them to guarantee the safety of both the facility as well as the health workers.

