

Minister Dlodlo promises to upgrade hospital record filing system

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Public Service and Administration Minister Ayanda Dlodlo has undertaken to engage Health Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi on changing Hospital Record Systems to Electoral form.

This as Minister Dlodlo accompanied KZN Health MEC to Prince Mshiyeni Memorial hospital at Umlazi to assess the functioning of the institutions' management systems.

Prince Mshiyeni hospital is a 1206-bedded Regional public health facility which was commissioned in 1981 serving the catchment of more than 700 000 uninsured people.

It offers a wide range of services including a 24 Hour emergency; Obstetrics and Gynae; Paediatric care; Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Unit; General surgery; Plastic surgery by a visiting specialist; Orthopaedics as well Psych specialist services that do a 72 hour observation to suspect cases.

The hospital's Out Patient Department's registers an average of 34 819 patients a month mostly referred by 18 Provincial Clinics as well as the 10 Local Government Clinics. This heavy load puts a strain on record keeping and record management.

When Minister Dlodlo and MEC Dhlomo arrived at the hospital, patients were complaining about the length of time they spend waiting for their files before they are seen by healthcare professionals.

To mitigate for this situation Minister Dlodlo: *"The other responsibility that we have according to the public service act, is also information management and knowledge management now one of the problems that we have seen across the country is record keeping and the management or file information of the patient.*

We are now going to be working together with the MEC to ensure that we improve that process. We have already visited quite a few hospitals across the country one of which was in Johannesburg, where we realised that the filing issues are a problem in hospitals. So, what we have decided to do, is look at people who have been suspended in the provinces to determine which amongst them can be brought back just to help to deal with the backlog on the filing system and just clean-up so that make easier for people working with these files to get files on time and give it to people.'

In appreciation of this offer and guidance, MEC Dhlomo said: *'When the National Government visits a province you don't ask why, but you welcome them because they don't really come in as oversight, they come in as a support structure from the higher level of Government. So, we welcome Minister Dlodlo joining us at Prince Mshiyeni and the support that she has given us. The Minister of Public Service and Administration is interested more to see quality care given to citizens of the country and we are focusing on Health type of quality of Health. So, we were here therefore show casing some of the stumble blocks in making sure that we deliver quality care to our citizens. One of those that we showed was hospital records, where hospital records are still filed manually and that become a big challenge in terms of a patient who was here last week can't find a file today. Number two, we are litigated a lot by the absence of records in our hospitals and it is this thing that is going to be solved when we go electronically. Now the Minister has seen and listened the frustration of the people shouting that 'I have been here since 6 o'clock, is 12 o'clock now midday I have not received a file, I don't even know when I am going to receive it and when I am going to see the Doctor'.*

So I think and hope that the Minister Dlodlo is going to discuss these issues with Minister Motsoaledi to fast track some of these issues really. If it's means maybe we pilot it in bigger hospitals like Prince Mshiyeni so be it, we welcome it. The second point is that she is aware that

sometimes in Government we suspend people to be at home for a year or two or three years whilst waiting to solve their cases and she is suggesting that those suspended people be brought in and to assist us in Health to serve as administrators and Clerks just mob-up and improve the quality of service that we give to patients, those two for me were really big contributions coming from the Minister Dlodlo"