

Academy to improve the health service

FROM now on, new hospital CEOs and other high-level managers responsible for healthcare delivery in South Africa will undergo specialised training in healthcare management. On Tuesday, the national Health Department launched the Academy for Leadership and Management in Healthcare, whose aim is to equip health managers with the know-how of navigating through situations that can compromise healthcare delivery. Many of the appalling conditions of South Africa's public healthcare service, such as hospitals running out of drugs or crucial equipment not working, are directly linked to the quality of managers that lead our public health institutions. The Academy for Leadership and Management particularly aims to empower hospital CEOs with practical knowledge about the day-to-day running of hospitals. Health director-general, Precious Matsoso, said the Academy would seek to fill the gap between current health education and practice, thus giving healthcare workers class-based as well as on-the-job training on crucial aspects of healthcare delivery, particularly towards the implementation of the National Health Insurance scheme. The Academy will start operating in January and the first students will be the new CEOs of the 97 hospitals located in eight provinces, with the exception of the Western Cape, that the national Health Department has decided need competent CEOs. Health Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, said the interviewing process for the appointment of the CEOs will be finalised before the end of the year. He said no new hospital CEO would start work before they had been taken through the necessary paces at the Academy for Leadership and Management in Healthcare. The Academy is modelled on the College of Medicine in South Africa. It will train healthcare workers who have an interest in healthcare management in practical skills needed for the smooth functioning of health services at hospital, district, provincial and national level. Motsoaledi said the Academy had been in the pipeline for the last two years and described it as a gigantic step towards the implementation of the National Health Insurance scheme. An advisory committee comprising 12 senior local and international experts in healthcare delivery will lead and provide guidance to the academy.

Khopotso Bodibe: Health-e News Service, 8 November 2012