

## Shortcomings of NHI evident - Politicsweb 1 August 2019

### Shortcomings of NHI evident in Bongani Regional District Hospital

*1 August 2019*

After numerous complaints about the condition and healthcare services at the Bongani Regional District Hospital in Welkom, I undertook an unannounced oversight inspection yesterday with four DA Councillors from Matjhabeng.

The first thing we noticed, and which is of great concern, is that we drove through the security gates and entered the hospital without any access control. This after the MEC of Health in the Free State, Hon Montseng Tsiu, reassured the Legislature that the “improved security plans” are functional.

The nurses are also fearing for their lives as there is no security at the student nurses home. They downed tools earlier this month, begging that the Department does something about the security. They legitimately pose the question: Should we be killed first before something is done?

Staff complain that security is a mess and in some instances bought their own chains and locks to lock up wards during the night. **See photo [here](#).**

Previously, in June 2018, the DA also did oversight at this health institution where major problems were found then, and remain current concerns today.

The renal unit received 4 brand new dialysis machines in March 2019, but are not able to be utilised as no consumables are available for these machines. **See photo [here](#).** Of the eleven dialysis machines, only 5 are operational causing a backlog in dialysis treatment. There is also a shortage of renal medication.

The orthopaedic ward has a backlog of about 26 patients that are awaiting procedures, some of these patients have been waiting as long as 39 days. There are 9 operating theatres of which only 6 are operational. Some of the reasons for the backlog in orthopaedic surgery are:

- Severe shortage of anaesthetists, surgeons and nursing staff;
- Air conditioners in theatres not always working;
- Theatre lights in poor condition;
- Only three anaesthesia machines are operational, five purchased by the Department from China cannot be utilised; and
- Arthroscopy Instruments need to be replaced.

In the medical wards, the problems at Government Health Institutions in the Free State include, amongst others, a severe shortage of professional staff, consumables, medication and linen. The male and female wards only have one blood pressure apparatus in a ward with 30 patients.

No maintenance is taking place at Bongani Hospital. There are several places where the roof leaks and floods the hospital if heavy rains occur. **See photo [here](#).**

We are also very concerned about the cement ceiling visibly sagging in the passage on the way to the children’s ward. **See photo [here](#).** This is a potential disaster waiting to happen and can be avoided with immediate intervention.

The DA will be writing to Hon Montseng Tsiu, to bring these issues to her attention. The DA strongly believes that it is a fundamental human right to have access to quality and safe health care and will do everything in our ability to put pressure on the Free State Health Department to acknowledge these problems and give immediate attention to them.

Instead of dealing effectively with the root problems and causes of our failing government healthcare system, the ANC-run government has already spent R4 billion on failed National Health Insurance (NHI) pilot projects. The NHI will not improve healthcare, but only serve to destroy the pockets of excellence that exist within the private healthcare sector. Bongani

District Hospital is an example of what can be expected in all hospitals under a NHI which, under an ANC-led administration, will implement further misery to taxpayers instead of improving service delivery.

*Issued by Mariette Pittaway, Whip of the Official Opposition in the Free State Provincial Legislature, 1 August 2019*