



# EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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Attention: MEC for Finance  
Hon Mlungisi Mvoko

Dear Hon Mvoko

Re: Deepening health crisis at Livingstone

I hope you are well.

I am gravely concerned about the unfolding crisis at Livingstone Hospital. Surgeons were unable to operate this week as there is no clean theatre linen. They are desperate to address the terrible orthopaedic surgery backlog, but they are simply not getting the necessary support from the Health Department.

We are all aware of the failed bid of the Department to address the medico-legal claims crisis which has effectively brought the department to its knees. However, reducing operating budgets at the provincial and tertiary hospitals will only exacerbate the claims crisis.

Already people have lost limbs and are maimed for life due to delayed surgeries. These delays are a direct result of non-payment to medical supply companies who have then refused to provide the necessary life-saving equipment. The current system, whereby the hospital procures small amounts of implants and other supplies from smaller companies as the need arises to effect savings, is simply a case of false economising.

By having no specialised equipment in stock, the doctors cannot do many of the surgeries, as they can only identify what equipment is required once they open the patient up in theatre. In these cases they then simply close the patient up again. They may have the right implant, but then don't have the correct screws.

The laundry is dysfunctional too, which impacts very negatively on theatre use as well as Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) throughout the hospital.

If at all possible, could you effect an adjustment budget as a matter of urgency for the triple purpose of

- i) settling all outstanding debts to suppliers of surgical and medical equipment,
- ii) finding a permanent solution to the laundry crisis, and
- iii) increasing the operational budget of the hospital, which serves a huge catchment area including Sarah Baartman district, parts of Chris Hani District and the entire NMB district, so that the surgery backlog can be addressed.

I do not believe that the hospital will be able to continue functioning until the half year budget adjustments are tabled. I would be grateful if you would give this proposal your consideration.

Kind regards,

Hon Jane Cowley

flowing.