Democratic Alliance Speech by

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Gauteng residents continue to suffer due to poor healthcare services and endless promises

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Madam Speaker,

The Honourable Premier observed correctly that the public health system in Gauteng is the largest and the most significant in South Africa.

Unfortunately, he couldn’t say that it’s the best quality provincial health system because every year the Auditor General gives it a terrible report.

It’s been a problem department for every Gauteng premier, with endless promises of strategic task teams and turnarounds.

Our new premier devotes only one page in his speech to this critical department.

I agree with his advocacy of computerisation to fix long queues and improve efficiency, but as usual, there is an appointed contractor with a shady history who won’t be able to provide the health information system that is needed.

It follows a long history of failed computerisation attempts. Do you remember the health smart card that Brian Hlongwa promised 15 years ago?

The sad truth is that this department doesn’t have the skills to modernise effectively.

There are still too many incompetent and corrupt people at the bloated head office.

Babita Deokaran tried to change things and she was murdered.

This department reminds me of Eskom. It’s what you get with many years of cadre deployment and the flourishing of internal criminal networks. The two seem to go together.

You can call it Eskom syndrome. It’s very difficult to reverse because the political party that caused the disaster cannot be the one to fix the disaster.

There is a reason why the only health system that gets clean audits is in the one province not run by the ANC.

It does not help in this context for the Honourable Premier to promise new hospitals in Olivienhoutbosch, Diepsloot, Daveyton and Orange Farm.

Nine years ago, the then Minister of Health Aaron Motsoaledi promised that a hospital would be built in Soshanguve.

That was NINE years ago and there isn’t even a completed plan to build it.

Some existing hospitals are in such bad condition that they are supposed to be replaced - this includes the Tambo Memorial, Yusuf Dadoo and Jubilee hospitals.

And half of the 37 hospitals are currently assessed as not compliant with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

It is estimated that R8 billion is required to rehabilitate the hospitals.

So where is the money to build new hospitals? And how will they be staffed and equipped?

This is the same provincial government that was unable to repair the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Hospital, which is now being done by the Development Bank of South Africa.

It’s the same provincial government that wasted R500 million on a hospital building it didn’t even own in a dangerous and far-out place in the West Rand.

I’m referring to the Anglo Ashanti Hospital that was opened with great fanfare by Premier Makhura in May 2021. This was a collective decision by the provincial executive council, so the Honourable Member Lesufi is implicated in this as well.

I warned about this at the time, as well as the other wards built for the Covid crisis that was in the wrong places or never completed.

This is what happens when a department is infected by the virus of Eskom syndrome.

This is why more than 36000 patients suffer while they are waiting for surgery, sometimes as long as five years.

Imagine being diagnosed today for hip surgery at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital and told to come back in February 2028 for your operation, which may then be cancelled because there is no clean linen or some other avoidable problem.

The cure for Eskom syndrome requires drastic action over a fairly long period of time.

A key ingredient in the cure is a different political party in charge which prioritises merit over cadre deployments, and ruthlessly weeds out the incompetents and the corrupt.

According to the Western Cape Health Department, it took them five to ten years to stabilise their finances, so they have now enjoyed four clean audits in a row.

Perhaps the Honourable Premier had so little to say about health because he knows that his time in office will be too short to do anything meaningful.

The good news is that in less than 18 months the voters of this province will rid themselves of the party that gave us Eskom syndrome.

**Media Enquiries**

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