



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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Attention: The MEC for Health

Hon Ntandokazi Capa

Re: Non-compliance of Wentzel Park Clinic in Alexandria

Last week I conducted oversight at Wentzel Park Clinic in Alexandria and what I saw was quite shocking. It is non-compliant with so many Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards that the continued use of this building as a clinic represents a massive litigious risk to the Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH).

Non-compliance issues at the current clinic include no toilets for the clients. The only partially functional toilet leads directly off the only proper consulting room in the building, so the privacy of patients is compromised. This toilet leaks badly and was reported to the infrastructure call centre last year, but there were no funds available to effect repairs. The issue was logged again in April this year but is now on the bottom of the infrastructure maintenance list.

The other two makeshift consulting rooms are inaccessible to wheelchair patients and injured patients as there are steps inside the building which they cannot navigate. Furthermore, medical equipment and other items must be stored in the passage which makes it too narrow for wheelchairs. The dispensary has only one internal door and in the event of a fire anywhere in the building, the pharmacy assistant and other staff and patients would not be able to escape.

Patients wait cramped together in a tiny outdoor area where there is no space to separate those with infectious and contagious illnesses from other patients. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures are impossible to practise, due to the space and water shortages.

This clinic has been on the Infrastructure upgrade priority list for more than a decade but due to ongoing systemic infrastructure failures by the ECDoH, patients and staff continue to suffer the indignity of having to make use of a building that presents an imminent threat to their health and safety.

I humbly suggest that the clinic be moved to a new government building less than a kilometre away, which houses the Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture.

I conducted an informal oversight visit to the new building and noted that the ground floor is substantially underutilised and would easily accommodate the clinic. It is easily accessible by wheelchair, has several access points and is compliant with Occupational Health and Safety standards.

It is the right of all patients to receive adequate healthcare services in facilities which are sufficiently spacious, compliant and safe. It is also the right of all nursing staff to deliver these services in facilities which nurture the dignity and well-being of their patients. Wentzel Park clinic offers neither and should be closed forthwith.

I look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Cowley

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Cowley', with a stylized flourish at the end.