

Gauteng Health Department Faces Huge Challenge of Shortages in Clinics

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“Gauteng is facing a huge challenge. All we hear about is bed shortages in hospitals, lots of the CHWs [community healthcare workers] do not have proper PPEs [personal protective equipment] like masks”, said a CHW based in the Orange Farm area. “There is no PPEs for CHWs [even though] the facility manager said the clinic will provide us with five masks each week,” she said.

“The province does not have the capacity to deal with the cases at the hospitals and clinics level. Capacity in terms of staff and resources,” the Orange Farm CHW said. There’s also challenges faced by CHWs when doing their door-to-door visits during this time of the third wave. “The challenge is that the [CHWs] don’t have enough information on the vaccine, and there are not enough PPEs for them.”

On 6 July 2021 in Ekangala (Tshwane), Dark City Clinic was closed due to three staff members who tested positive for COVID-19 according to a CHW based in the Ekangala area. On 19 July 2021, eight other CHWs tested positive for COVID-19 with three other staff members, yet the clinic was opened the following day.

A CHW based in the Westrand of Gauteng said; “at PJ Maree Clinic [in Randfontein on the Westrand], there is no masks, we told to use our own masks”. In Kocksoord and Bekkersdal Clinics (also on the Westrand), people are screened inside the clinic, which exposes everyone to the virus. The District manager refuses to supply the CHWs with PPEs, and affected sites are not properly fumigated.

On 22 July 2021, “we were told that there is a shortage of data capturers at the vaccine sites. Now [it will] take some for training and then we will go an assist there,” said a CHW based in Eden Park (on the Eaststrand of Gauteng). “We are told we don't have to worry about the patient work backlog or the monthly statistics during that period of assisting at vaccine site”, but it not clear who will do this work when the Department refuses to hire more CHWs.

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