

Bathurst Clinic Sends People Away

By Sinalo Peyi

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Bathurst - Located in the Eastern Cape under Ndlambe Municipality, the township has only one clinic used by the community and surrounding farms. The clinic has failed to help or assist people in getting their medication or treatment after the staff embarked on a protest on 11 March 2026. Community members and patients were taken out of the premises by Health Workers from Port Alfred and Bathurst who refused to let the clinic function, demanding the Department of Health to hire more Health workers with or without Matric. Patients wake up as early as 1:00 am to stand in queues to get assistance from the nurses but were left upset that they did not get any assistance. Many felt that they should have fought without disturbing the clinic operation, as it could put the health of sick people at risk.

The patients were taken out by the nurses who did not work for the day. After the health workers took everyone out they locked the security officers inside when they refused to participate in the march. The march was a call for attention to the Department of Health to hire them permanently as they want to assist the clinic to operate even with a shortage of nurses.

The people were told to get their medication at Port Alfred Hospital which presented a challenge as many community members are unemployed and struggle to get transport fare to get their medication. The second problem is that when you sick people skip the clinic going directly to the hospital, they do not get quick assistance at hospital and may be in danger health wise.

Bathurst Police assisted by community shareholders called a meeting reasoning with the health workers on other ways to voice out, that do not harm the community, allowing the clinic to continue to operate and help people.

Nolukhanyo Clinic has been faced with several issues including a shortage of medication, a shortage of nurses and power outages due to loadshedding which happens often in Bathurst. People are then turned away because there is no generator to help the clinic function even during electricity cuts.

Siphosethu Kolisi, a community member, commented that as much as it is important for the clinic to have health workers but it is also important for the clinic to operate. "The Department of Health is supposed to fix this problem before people die of not receiving treatment as travelling is no option, that because of financial issues." She concluded saying that she is a hundred percent behind the health workers, noting that the clinic needed to stay operational as well.

Anesipho Tokwe also a community member, commented that the clinic is operating smoothly with the health workers there "but also we need to understand that people's health needs people who are more informed about their job description and that needs a bit of an education. It's not shocking that the requirement is grade 12 as most jobs but let's support them."

Health workers agreed to let the clinic function while waiting for a meeting with the provincial Department of Health. What will happen next will be decided in that meeting.

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