

Mpumala Health has 6 months to fill posts

The Mpumalanga Department of Health and Social Development has six months to fill all vacant, advertised posts, says Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang.

By [Sydney Masinga](#) 13 Feb 2008

She visited Mpumalanga on Monday, 11 February, following reports of a crisis in the provincial health system, which has only 700 state doctors to serve a population of about 3.5 million people.

The province needs at least 9,000 state doctors.

Speaking at a press conference, Minister Tshabalala-Msimang said she had an open discussion with provincial management and it was agreed to implement short, medium and long term solutions to the problems.

"A human resource management team from the national department will come to Mpumalanga next week to assist in finalising the organogram for the provincial department as a matter of urgency," she said.

For the organogram to be effective, all vacant, advertised posts must be filled within the next six months, or else provincial managers risked losing their jobs.

It was also agreed to decentralise authority related to financial and human resource decisions.

"So, the process of delegating appropriate financial and human resources to low and middle management and hospital management should commence immediately," she said.

The minister also ordered the provincial department to pay all outstanding overtime payments and settle all accounts for supplies and services rendered within the next 30 days.

"The issue of shortage of health professionals was also discussed, and as a short term intervention, we asked the SA Military Health Service to provide relief in the province in terms of providing specialists and doctors," Tshabalala-Msimang said.

She said efforts would be made to fast track the immigration process for Tunisian doctors who have been appointed to work in the province.

"We are committed as the national department of health to provide support to provinces so that we move together as a country in improving the health of our population," she said.

The minister also said that as a long term goal, discussions have been entered with the University of Pretoria to train more Mpumalanga students in the field of medicine.

"We will be going out on a robust recruitment strategy for the province and the country this year, and people who are not on board or on same level with us, should just ship out for people who are willing to serve the department," she said.

She said the developing world, including South Africa, shared the challenge of a shortage of health care workers.

"We only produce 1,300 doctors a year in the country, and that is not enough.

"That is the reason the African states are meeting in March in Kampala, Uganda to discuss ways to alleviate human resource challenges in health departments," she said.

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