

First specialist mother and child hospital launched in Free State

An initiative to establish the country's first academic hospital specialising in paediatric and maternal health has been launched in the Free State.

As part of a multi-faceted initiative under the auspices of the University of the Free State (UFS), the 350-bed mother and child hospital will support the objectives of the country's strategic development goals.



L-R Dr Khotso Mkhlele, chancellor of the UFS, Rolene Strauss, Miss World 2014 and patron of the Mother and Child Academic Hospital, Prof André Venter, head of the department of paediatrics and child health, and Dr Riaan Els, CEO of the Fuchs Foundation South Africa. Photo: Charl Devenish

In line with development plans

In addition, it will further the Free State strategic transformation plan (STP) by improving access to healthcare for the most vulnerable members of the population, thus reducing paediatric mortality and improving maternal health.

Another objective of the project is to develop academic excellence, and improve the environment in which medical specialists and subspecialists develop their skills according to international standards.

Blueprint for other specialist facilities

Under the leadership of Professor André Venter, the University of the Free State department of paediatrics and child health serves over 250,000 children of the southern regions of the Free State at secondary care level, and is responsible for the tertiary care of nearly one-million children from the whole of the Free State and Northern Cape provinces, as well as some children from Northwest and Eastern Cape provinces and Lesotho.

Venter, leader of the project, hopes that it will serve as a blueprint for other academic hospitals in the country, and mark the beginning of an era of highly specialised medical care for the most vulnerable of people.

Dreams do come true

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the [Fuchs Foundation](#), donated R2,25m towards building the hospital, a contribution which will bring the project a step closer to its realisation.

“Sometimes dreams do come true, and finally, this institution is starting to dream big dreams,” says Dr Khotso Mokhele, chancellor of UFS.

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