

MEC apologises to Brits Hospital patients

North West Health MEC Dr Magome Masike has apologised to patients for having to endure the distress of a makeshift hospital while contractors are battling to complete the new Brits Hospital.

Masike, who visited the hospital unannounced on Tuesday, told patients he understood that being in hospital was stressful enough, and that they should not have to deal with the additional burden of a makeshift hospital.

Masike's visit follows numerous complaints from staff and patients about overcrowding at the hospital and patients having to share wards despite having different disease profiles.

He said he was aware of the complexities and many challenges within the hospital and was committed to using every available means to ease the situation.

"You need to bear with us while we sort out the situation. It won't be easy, however, with everyone working together and supporting one another, a success story can be told," Masike told patients.

He further pledged his undivided attention to improve and accelerate access to health services delivery in the area by applying pressure on contractors to hand over the 215-bed hospital to the department by end of February 2013.

The Brits Hospital was demolished in 2008 to make way for the new hospital.

The 36-bed makeshift hospital serves a population of over 300 000 and it experiences overcrowding daily and offers no critical services like neonatal, burns and maternity.

Patients who are in need of unavailable services are transferred to nearby health facilities.

The department said that despite the overcrowding challenges, the hospital had managed to survive outbreaks of diseases like cholera in March 2009, measles in December 2009 and the recent suspected meningitis cases.