



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MEDIA STATEMENT : THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ON REDUNDANT BEDS AT CHRIS HANI BARANGWANATH ACADEMIC HOSPITAL

The National Department of Health noted with alarm the video doing rounds about the redundant beds at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital. We wish to state upfront that there is nothing sinister about what the hospital has done. While this issue belongs to Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital and hence Gauteng Department of Health, we thought it prudent to respond as the National Department of Health. This is occasioned by the fact that in some quarters there is an attempt to link this issue with the Stimulus Package which the National Department of Health asked the President to provide towards the end of last year.

We contend that the said beds can no longer be used at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital or in any other health facility for that matter. During the 2016/17 financial year, the hospital took a decision to replace the beds that are shown on the video. The clinical staff and nursing management had raised concern about these beds.

The beds presented the following problems:

- They were too high and contributed to serious injuries when delirious or confused patients tried to climb out of them.
- These beds are made of a hard steel structure and patients used to bang their heads against this steel structure.
- The height of the beds is not adjustable even in the case of vulnerable patients

In keeping with modern standards of management of patients in especially the vulnerable ones, the management of the hospital took a decision in 2016/17 financial year to replace the beds in the medical, surgical and maternity wards where the mentioned problems were most prevalent.

The hospital then procured 1000 high-low electronically adjustable beds which are used in all modern hospital settings. These high-low beds have an ergonomic benefit for health care workers as they can adjust the height to whatever level is deemed necessary. They can also be wheeled from ward to theatre, or any other department back to the ward with minimal disruption of patients comfort.

After acquiring these new modern beds, the hospital then took a decision to donate the old unused beds to smaller District hospitals even outside Gauteng.

The HOD of Health in Gauteng Province, Prof. Mkhululi Lukhele then stopped the hospital from donating these old beds to any other health facility, on the basis that what is NOT good for patients at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital CANNOT be good for any other patient regardless of which hospital they are at. We agree with him on this particular approach.

However, we believe that there was a shortcoming on the side of the HOD, when on stopping the hospital, he did not guide them or instruct them to use an alternative method of disposal which is provided for the rules of the public service.

The HOD has been accordingly instructed to take this course of action.

We wish to dispel the notion that the National Department should not have acquired beds and linen via the Stimulus Package because beds are lying idle at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital.

There is definitely shortage of beds in some hospitals around the country and these old beds at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital could not have provided for the needs of our health facilities. Through the Stimulus Package, we have acquired 5652 high-low electronic adjustable beds for adults and 2663 beds for children under the age of four years. These beds are now being distributed to health facilities around the country together with new linen to alleviate the shortages.

We believe that the Stimulus Package brought necessary relief for our patients and should not in any way be linked with the discarded beds at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital.

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