



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists

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Health Minister engages stakeholders on sustainable solutions for mental health care users at Talisman Foundation

Pretoria: Over the past two weeks there have been concerns in the media around the whole country about a possibility of tragic incidents of Life Esidimeni repeating itself in Gauteng. An NGO called Talisman Foundation is managing a facility in which the mental health users are hosted. This facility is owned by the Old Apostolic Church (South Africa). The fear, anxiety and concern were generated by the fact that it was reported that the owners of the premises which is the church, are going to evict the Talisman Foundation because they are in the process of selling the building.

The Gauteng Department of Health is subsidising the Talisman Foundation for the work they are doing on mental health users.

Stakeholder Engagements

The Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, on 1 May 2026, led a high-level stakeholder engagement aimed at finding urgent and sustainable solutions regarding the challenges facing the Talisman Foundation. The Minister did this because there is no one in South Africa who wants to see a repeat of Life Esidimeni ever again, and further more Minister believed that all stakeholders involved in this saga will not want to see Life Esidimeni repeating itself in South Africa.

This meeting was chaired by the Minister himself, and attended by the following:

- MEC for Health and Wellness in Gauteng, Ms Faith Mazibuko
- Acting DG of the National Health Department with the Mental Health Unit
- Senior officials of Health in Gauteng
- Chairperson of Johannesburg District Mental Health Review Board
- Representative of SA Human Rights Commission
- Representative of Section 27
- South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)
- Executive and Board of the Talisman Foundation
- The leaders of Old Apostolic Church (South Africa).

The engagement was constructive and indeed all stakeholders affirmed to the Minister that they will never like to see the repeat of Life Esidimeni in our country. It was instructive to learn that actually, the decision by the church to sell the facility, has been taken as far back as 2003, and the church has been waiting very patiently since then.

We can assure the nation that the process of finding an amicable solution was agreed upon in that meeting, such that, no mental health user will be removed from the premises of the church, while this process of looking for a solution is going on. It has come to our attention that, some family members out of panic, removed their beloved ones from the centre, when they really still need to be there.

A team has been appointed from the stakeholders in the meeting to urgently follow up the people who have moved away, assess them and make an informed decision about the wayforward with each individual. The Minister wishes to thank Old Apostolic Church (South Africa) for their deep understanding, empathy and cooperation in this matter, and we believe their Christian faith took precedence over anything else. As such, we can confirm that a conditional extension of three months has been given to Talisman Foundation and the Department of Health, while a solution is being sought. The meeting agreed that no more mental health users should be removed by anybody from the centre.

The Ministry of Health would like to thank all parties for their valuable contribution and commitment to seeking solutions that ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable members of the society in mental health care facilities. The Minister is prepared to take interviews on this matter.

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