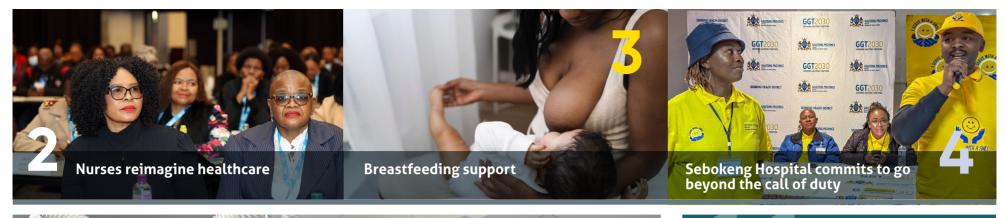
# NEWSBULLETIN

Official Newsletter of the Gauteng Department of Health

03 AUGUST 2025





# X-ray machines in local clinics provide early detection and timely treatment

Communities across Gauteng are now receiving diagnostic imaging services directly at their local Community Health Centres (CHCs) and clinics, resulting in early detection, timely treatment, and improved patient outcomes.

This development follows the Gauteng Department of Health's (GDoH) intensified rollout of X-ray machine installations in primary healthcare facilities across the province. The initiative aims not only to enhance diagnostic capabilities but to also reduce referrals to tertiary hospitals, thereby decongesting higher-level facilities and improving overall system efficiency.

Currently, the majority of CHCs in Gauteng are equipped with X-ray machines. Plans are underway to ensure that additional primary healthcare facilities including Daveyton Clinic, Phola Park, Empilisweni, and Ennerdale CHCs are equipped with on-site imaging services to minimise delays in diagnosis and treatment.

During the 2025/26 Budget Vote presentation, MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, reaffirmed the department's commitment to strengthening primary healthcare.

As part of this commitment, the MEC conducted a service delivery oversight visit to Khutsong Main CHC in Carletonville, where she reviewed ongoing refurbishments and inspected the

newly installed X-ray machine, which is currently awaiting approval from the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority - expected within a month.

In the meantime, facilities without permanent X-ray installations are being supported by mobile X-ray trucks, ensuring that communities continue to receive essential diagnostic services.

"To improve access and strengthen primary healthcare services, we have successfully installed the much-needed X-ray machines in Westbury, Florida, and Fanyana Nhlapo Community Health Centres as part of our commitment to improve diagnostics in local communities," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko during the Budget Vote.

X-ray machines play a critical role in detecting fractures, infections, tumours, and lung conditions such as pneumonia and tuberculosis. With these diagnostic tools readily available, nurses and doctors at the primary care level can make informed decisions, significantly improving the quality and speed of care.

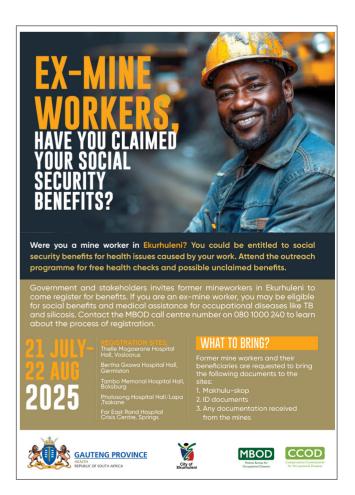
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Thembokuhle Ntuli-Karigani, Chief Director of the West Rand District Health Services, accompanied the MEC during her visit to Khutsong Main CHC. She said that by installing X-ray machines in all primary healthcare facilities, the GDoH is not only improving access but also enhancing the quality and safety of care for thousands of patients, especially those with trauma-related injuries.

"It is common that undiagnosed or mismanaged fractures can lead to permanent disability, infection, or improper healing. With this advanced medical technology, our local communities are now able to access early imaging to ensure timely and appropriate care," said Ntuli-Karigani.









### Managing psychosomatic pain

The majority of people who have not visited a physiotherapist may not be aware of the term "psychosomatic pain", a physical pain that is caused by emotional, psychological, or mental factors, rather than direct physical injury or illness alone.

Although it is often under-recognised and misunderstood, it is estimated that up to 20 - 30% of patients in physiotherapy settings may present with pain that has a significant psychological or emotional component, even if it initially appears to be purely physical.

According to Palesa Phetwane, Physiotherapist at the West Rand District Health Services, stress is one of the major causes of psychosomatic pain. Stress causes many bodily functions to deteriorate or not work properly without people noticing it.

"Along with stress, which is described as a form of psychological and mental discomfort, anxiety, depression and unresolved trauma or abuse can lead to psychosomatic pain.

"Anxiety leads to muscle tightness, especially in the neck, shoulders, jaw, and back. Depression alters brain chemistry and pain processing. People with depression may experience generalised body aches, slowed recovery, or reduced pain tolerance. In other cases, Unresolved or Past trauma, especially in childhood (emotional, physical, or sexual), can manifest as chronic physical symptoms in adulthood," said Phetwane.

Common symptoms of psychosomatic pain include headaches, back pain, abdominal discomfort, fatigue and generalised aches. It is diagnosed



through a process of exclusion and careful clinical assessment, especially when no visible injury or medical explanation is found. Tests may include blood work, imaging (X-rays, MRIs), and neurological exams.

However, conditions like Somatic Symptom Disorder (recognised in DSM-5) are assessed by a trained professional and considered when pain persists despite normal test results. The person shows excessive worry or behaviours related to the symptoms.

Itumeleng Matlala, Physiotherapist at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital said that common misconceptions that patients have about psychosomatic pain include phrases such as "there's no injury, the pain must be fake" or "Talking about emotions won't help my pain".

"To ensure that we help patients accept that their pain might have a psychological component without making them feel dismissed or misunderstood, we firstly validate the pain as real and educate patients using gentle, non-stigmatising language," said Matlala.

Treatment and management of psychosomatic pain include aerobic exercises as they boost endorphins, reduce anxiety, and improve mood; balance training which restores confidence and physical stability or coordination; manual therapy and stretching; and relaxation therapy which reduces stress and enhances emotional regulation.

Physiotherapists also use treatments that include patient education on how stress affects posture, breathing, and muscle tension, as well as strategies on how to manage pain by tailoring exercises to each patient's individual needs and pain symptoms.

In addition, to ensure that patients are able to manage psychosomatic pain at home, there are tailored exercises to each individual's needs. This includes incorporating deep breathing exercises and core stability exercises, as well as encouraging gentle movement like walking, yoga, or stretching amongst others.



Koketso Maraba

Nurses are stepping into the spotlight as key leaders in Africa's healthcare future. This was the strong message delivered at the 5th African Nursing Conference, where healthcare leaders, frontline nurses, and policy experts gathered to reimagine a more inclusive and effective health system for the continent.

Held under the theme of "Transformation and Leadership," the conference highlighted how nurses are not just care providers - they are researchers, mentors, innovators, and trusted voices in their communities. As discussions unfolded, one truth became clear - nurses are ready to lead, and they must be supported to do so.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, praised nurses for their hard work, emotional strength, and resilience in the face of daily challenges. However, she also challenged the outdated notion that nurses are merely the backbone of healthcare.

"For too long, nurses have been seen as essential yet rarely recognised as the brains or the voices that guide the system. Thankfully, this view is beginning to shift," she said.

To support this progress, the MEC added that government is investing in improved hospital infrastructure, digital health tools, and wellness programmes aimed at helping nurses manage burnout and stress.

"True empowerment cannot come from policy alone. It requires collaboration between nurses, government leaders, and communities working together," emphasised the MEC.

Dr. Tracey De Klerk, Deputy Director for Nursing Compliance and Research and Chairperson of the conference, encouraged nurses to recognise their own skills and the value they bring to healthcare. "Many nurses, especially those trained in trauma care, go above and beyond their job descriptions. Their extra efforts, often done after hours, play a vital role in patient outcomes," she said.

Dr. De Klerk also stressed the importance of formally recognising and utilising these skills during working hours to significantly improve healthcare delivery. She drew attention to the disparities between public and private healthcare systems in South Africa and called for stronger partnerships between the two sectors.

"We need to share ideas and resources to solve challenges more effectively," she urged.

Technology should not replace the care and connection that only a nurse can provide. Instead, nurses must be supported as the bridge between high-tech tools and human compassion."

~ Dr. De Klerk

Adding a future-focused perspective, Dr. Geraldine Timothy from Discovery Health spoke about the growing role of digital tools in nursing. She described how artificial intelligence, personalised care, and data analysis are already transforming healthcare delivery.

"Technology should not replace the care and connection that only a nurse can provide. Instead, nurses must be supported as the bridge between high-tech tools and human compassion," she said.

A key focus of the conference was on training and leadership development. Delegates agreed that strong, well-trained nursing teams are essential to building resilient healthcare systems. Partnerships between both private and public hospitals, universities, and professional bodies are helping ensure that nurses receive the support they need to learn, grow, and lead.

The 5th African Nursing Conference served as a powerful reminder that nurses are not only essential to healthcare - but they are also leading its transformation. With the right support, training, and opportunities, nurses across Africa will continue to drive lasting change for generations to come.

# **Infants** nutritional wellbeing raises alarm

**Andisiwe Ciya** 

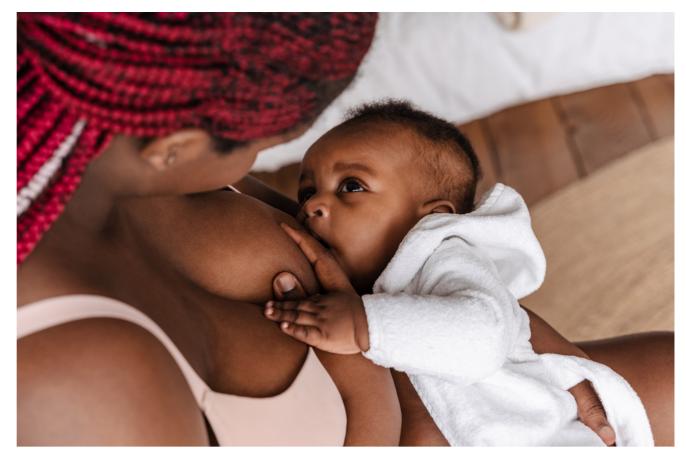
Breastfeeding within one hour of birth has declined from 73.3% to 62.4% between the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, while breastfeeding rates at 14 weeks have stagnated at 47.3%.

This is according to statistics from the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH), raising an alarming concern over the nutritional wellbeing of infants and the urgent action needed from all sectors of society to ensure that children receive all the nutrients needed from their first moments of life.

To address this, the GDoH has implemented several key interventions including the establishment of human Milk Bank at Steve Biko Academic, Kalafong, Sebokeng, and Leratong Hospitals, in partnership with the South African Breastmilk Reserve. These facilities provide donated breastmilk to vulnerable infants in postnatal wards and neonatal intensive care units, aiming to reduce early neonatal and postnatal morbidity and mortality.

Department has also ensured the establishment of Kangaroo Mother and Child Units across hospitals in the province to provide a platform where mothers get to bond with their premature babies by visiting them while still admitted to not only breastfeed them but express for them as well. The Kangaroo Mother and Child Units enable babies to fully develop before they can be discharged.

In addition, the GDoH is also working to strengthen



breastfeeding support systems across all public health facilities and encourages the creation of supportive environments for breastfeeding mothers in public spaces, workplaces, and religious settings.

As part of World Breastfeeding Week (1-7 August 2025), celebrated under the theme "Prioritise Breastfeeding: Create Sustainable Support Systems," the department is highlighting the multifaceted benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers.

Compared to store-bought formula, breastmilk is superior. It is the optimal food for infants - safe, clean, and rich in antibodies that protect against childhood illnesses. It contains a unique balance of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and bioactive components tailored to the baby's developing digestive system.

"It is vital for mothers to breastfeed, as breast milk

offers perfect nutrition for infants and is crucial for strengthening the mother-child bond.

"The unique composition of breastmilk not only fosters healthy growth but also enhances cognitive development and boosts immunity, significantly reducing the risk of infections and illnesses," said Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Moreover, the GDoH has urged partners and families to encourage and support mothers of newborn babies to breastfeed. Through encouragement, shared responsibilities, and emotional presence, women are able to be empowered to breastfeed with confidence and comfort.

Through these efforts, the Department aims to reverse the declining trends and ensure that every child receives the best possible start in life beginning with the nourishment and protection offered by breastmilk.



In an effort to protect children from the ongoing measles outbreak and provide a booster dose of the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine to children between 06 months and under 15 years of age, the Gauteng Department of Health will on Tuesday, 05 August 2025 launch a province-wide Measles-Rubella (MR) Mass Vaccination Campaign, at Steve Biko Primary School in Orange Farm, Johannesburg Health District.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Ms. Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, will lead the launch under the theme "Lifelong Protection against Measles and Rubella Disease." The campaign will run from 04 August to 12 September 2025, and target over 4 million children in schools, crèches, and communities across all five health districts in the province.

The campaign comes as Gauteng continues to respond to a persistent measles outbreak that has affected all districts since 2022, with over 370 confirmed cases recorded since January 2025. The MR vaccine, which protects against both measles and rubella, was introduced into the public immunisation schedule in late 2024 and is now being rolled out at scale.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko will be joined by health officials, partners, community leaders, and learners during the event, which will include on-site vaccinations and health education.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to sign and return consent forms distributed through schools and crèches to allow their children to be immunised. Vaccination is safe, free, and proven to prevent severe complications and disabilities associated with measles and rubella.

The Department is also calling on retired and active nurses, staff nurses, data capturers, and community members to volunteer for this important campaign. Volunteers will assist with vaccinations, mobilisation, data capturing, and administrative

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support in their local communities. Additionally, universities, nursing colleges, and private hospital groups are urged to support the campaign by allocating student and practicing nurses to assist health teams.

Interested volunteers or members of the public who need more information may contact their local district coordinators:

Co-ordinator	Contact
Johannesburg:	071 863 7773
Ms Dineo Mafura	Dineo.Mafura@gauteng.gov.za
<b>Tshwane:</b> Ms Mari Van Der Westhuizen	073 437 2662 Maria.vanderWesthuizen@ gauteng.gov.za
<b>Ekurhuleni:</b>	083 536 5687
Ms Dineo Ndimande	Dineo.Ndimande@gauteng.gov.za
Sedibeng:	060 537 8315
Ms Joyce Malimabe	Joyce.Malimabe@gauteng.gov.za
<b>West Rand:</b>	073 835 3226
Ms Yolandi Luther	Yolandi.Luther@gauteng.gov.za
Gauteng Provincial Office:	083 432 8108
Ms Mashadi Ganyane	Mashadi.Ganyane@gauteng.gov.za

### **Hospital** infection controls strengthened

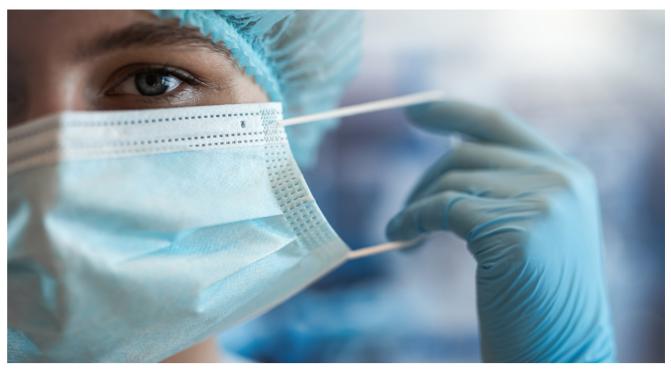
In a decisive move to curb the incidence of nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infections across healthcare facilities, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has rolled out a series of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening infection prevention and control (IPC).

Key among these measures is the establishment of a dedicated IPC committee, which meets monthly to oversee the implementation of IPC guidelines and address challenges faced by healthcare facilities.

The GDoH has also introduced a Hospital-Associated Infections (HAI) surveillance system, enabling IPC practitioners to conduct daily, weekly, and monthly monitoring to track infection trends and identify responsible microorganisms.

To ensure swift action, immediate control measures are enacted, when necessary, with alert situations escalated to the Provincial IPC and Quality Assurance Directorate for timely intervention.

In addition, hospitals have formed Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) teams to monitor the use of antimicrobial agents. These teams report findings to the Provincial AMS Committee, helping to combat antimicrobial resistance through strategic oversight and guidance.



The GDoH has also introduced a **Hospital-Associated Infections** (HAI) surveillance system, enabling IPC practitioners to conduct daily, weekly, and monthly monitoring to track infection trends and identify responsible microorganisms."

Healthcare workers are also being equipped with updated knowledge through a refresher course for IPC practitioners, with participants receiving a certificate of competence upon completion.

During a recent sitting of the Provincial Legislature, Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, addressed questions regarding

the department's efforts. She confirmed that an Infection Prevention and Control Assessment Framework (IPCAF) evaluation had been conducted to assess compliance across facilities.

"Six healthcare facilities were identified as underperforming during the IPCAF assessment. Enforcement letters were issued to the CEOs of those hospitals, and the IPC committee conducted follow-up visits to guide the development of Quality Improvement Plans and monitor their implementation," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The findings from the IPCAF assessments were shared with hospital management and staff to promote transparency and accountability.

These interventions reflect the GDoH's commitment to improving patient safety and reducing hospital-acquired infections through proactive monitoring, staff training, and strategic collaboration.

## Sebokeng Hospital commits to go beyond the call of duty

Koketso Maraba

Sebokeng Regional Hospital has officially launched the "I Serve with a Smile" (ISWAS) campaign, a provincial initiative aimed at transforming patient care through empathy, kindness, and dignity.

The campaign, provincialised in 2023 by MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, was formally rolled out at the hospital on Wednesday, 30 July 2025.

The ISWAS campaign focuses on improving patient experiences by encouraging healthcare workers to go beyond clinical duties and offer compassionate, human-centered care. It also promotes kindness among staff, fostering stronger teams and better service delivery.

"Despite the challenges we face, our hospital remains steadfast in its commitment to Serve with a Smile. This campaign is about more than service delivery, it's about how we make people feel when they walk through our doors," said Dr. Peter Motlhaoleng, Acting CEO of the hospital.

Dr. Motlhaoleng highlighted recent improvements at the hospital, including the launch of the Cerebral Palsy Centre of Excellence, installation of a new CT scanner, and development of sustainable food gardens, all aimed at enhancing patient outcomes and holistic healing.

Representing MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko at the event, Dr. Salamina Hlahane, Director in the Office of the CEO and Nursing Services, emphasised the emotional impact of care to patients.

"Patients may forget what you said or did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.





Care without compassion is not true care," she said. For patients like Gladys Malamba, the campaign's impact is already being felt. Malamba who recently gave birth at Sebokeng Hospital was elated while sharing her experience.

"I did not know where the clinic was when I arrived," she recalled. "But the staff didn't just point me in the right direction. They walked with me from the gate all the way inside. I felt supported and cared for."

"I was scared and overwhelmed when I went to the hospital to deliver my baby. But the staff treated me with patience and kindness. It was nothing like I had experienced before, where you feel ignored in a busy space. Here, I felt seen," said Malamba.



She went on to express her gratitude towards porters who wheeled her to the theatre with compassion, the nurses who ensured her comfort and safety, and the kitchen staff who accommodated her dietary needs.

"To them, maybe it was just their job. But to me, it meant everything. As a mother, I was worried for my baby, and their support helped me stay strong," she added.

As the ISWAS campaign continues to grow and improve the public healthcare system, Sebokeng Hospital has acknowledged that true healing begins not with a prescription, but with a smile, a helping hand, and a commitment to treating every patient with humanity.





#### **WOMEN'S MONTH MESSAGE FROM THE** MEC FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN GAUTENG, MS NOMANTU NKOMO-RALEHOKO

August is not just a month on our calendar, it is a living reminder of the courage and power of South African women. We stand on the shoulders of the more than 20 000 fearless women who marched to the Union Buildings on 09 August 1956 to demand dignity, freedom, and equality. Their footsteps still echo in our policies, in our workplaces, in our homes, and in our hearts.

This Women's Month, we join the national call to accelerate efforts towards "Building Resilient Economies for All". It is a call to do more, move faster, and reach further.

> Whether you are a nurse, doctor, cleaner, driver, mother, student, businesswoman, or community leader, your contribution matters. Your voice matters. You matter. At the Gautena Department of Health, we are proud to be home to strong, capable women who lead with heart and serve with resilience. As we celebrate your achievements, we also recommit ourselves to breaking down the barriers that still exist like limited opportunities, gender-based violence, and unfair social norms.

Let us use this month to support one another, uplift each other, and build a society where every woman and girl can thrive regardless of her background, position, or postcode. Let us honour our past by shaping a better future.

> Happy Women's Month. Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo!



#### Sister Mokwana sets the standard for patient care

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my heartfelt appreciation for the exceptional care I received during my visit to Skinner Street Clinic on Monday, 21 July 2025.

My experience was profoundly shaped by Sister Itumeleng Mokwana, whose professionalism, compassion,

and attentiveness went far beyond expectations. From the moment I arrived, she made me feel comfortable, respected, and truly cared for. Her calm demeanour and strong communication skills created a reassuring environment that every patient deserves.

Sister Mokwana's ability to listen attentively and respond thoughtfully is remarkable. Despite my ongoing struggle with high blood pressure, even while taking my medication regularly, she was the first to identify the underlying issue, simply by paying close attention to my symptoms and concerns. Her insight and attention to detail made a real difference in my care.

She is not only well-organised and deeply knowledgeable about her responsibilities, but she also demonstrates leadership qualities that would make her an asset in any managerial role. Her empathy and emotional intelligence allow her to connect with patients on a human level, offering both comfort and clarity. Sister Mokwana is the kind of healthcare professional who strengthens the hands of management and can be trusted to lead in their absence. If every state hospital and clinic had staff of her calibre, our public healthcare system would be transformed. Her dedication, kindness, and loyalty to her work are evident in every interaction. She is, without a doubt, one of the most kind-hearted professionals I've encountered in the public health sector.

I kindly request that this letter be shared with the relevant management so they can recognise the incredible impact Sister Mokwana is making, one patient at a time.

Sincerely, A grateful patient, Helen.

\* Letter grammatically edited

**Gauteng Health Department** 





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Gauteng Department of Health





For any hospital or clinic complaints please contact the Gauteng Department of **Health** on:

patientcomplaints.health@gauteng.gov.za

SMS: 35023

For letters, contribution and suggestion contact GDoHstories@gauteng.gov.za

For more information on Gauteng Department of Health programmes, News and other information, visit our social media pages:



# NASI ISPANI! JOBS ON OFFER

BECOME PART OF A PATIENT-CENTRED CLINICIAN-LED, STAKEHOLDER-DRIVEN

#### **GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH VACANCIES**

Professional Nurse General: Tshwane District Health Services

Professional Nurse General: West Rand District Health Services

Professional Nurse General: City of Johannesburg District Health Services

Professional Nurse General: Sedibeng District Health Services

Professional Nurse General: Ekurhuleni District Health Services

Professional Nurse General: Tshwane Rehabilitation Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Cullinan Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Tara The Morose Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Sterkfontein Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Leratong Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Weskoppies Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Mamelodi Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Sizwe Tropical Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Edenvale Hospital

Professional Nurse General: University of Pretoria Oral Health Care Centre

Professional Nurse General: Sebokeng Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Sefako Makgatho University Oral Health Centre

Professional Nurse General: Far East Rand Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Wits Oral Health Centre

Professional Nurse General: Pholosong Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Jubilee Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Thelle Mogoerane Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Heidelberg Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Kopanong Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Rahima Moosa Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Bertha Gxowa Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Tambo Memorial Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Odi Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Helen Joseph Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Tshwane District Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Kalafong Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Bheki Mlangeni Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Tembisa Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Pretoria West Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Carltonville Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Steve Biko Academic Hospital

Professional Nurse General: South Rand Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Dr. Yusuf Dadoo Hospital

Professional Nurse General: Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital

#### **DON'T BE A VICTIM OF BURSARY SCAMS AND FAKE JOBS ADVERTS!**

Individuals looking at applying for government jobs, bursaries and learning opportunities should consider tips below:

- Search for opportunities on verified government platforms including social media platforms, websites and adverts through reliable newspapers, e.g. the Gauteng e-Recruitment System (Professional Job Centre), Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) vacancy circular.
- Always follow instructions carefully and fill in Z83 with precision.
- Students who want to study towards a Higher Certificate in Emergency Medical Care (one year) or Diploma in Emergency Medical Care (two years) at Legbone College of Emergency Care. For more info visit: https://lcoec.ac.za
- Study towards a Diploma in nursing in various specialties including critical care nursing, trauma and emergency nursing, amongst others at the Gauteng College of Nursing. For more info, please call: 011 644 8946



**NOTE:** Applications should be submitted strictly online at the following E-Recruitment portal:

https://jobs.gauteng.gov.za/.

No hand delivered, faxed or e-mailed applications will be accepted. NB: For assistance with online applications please e-mail your query to e-recruitment@gauteng.gov.za.