

## R10m to recruit mental healthcare practitioners in EC

In a bid to address mental healthcare in the Eastern Cape Health Department, the ministry has announced that a budget of R10m has been set aside to recruit health practitioners.



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“The plan includes recruitment of mental healthcare practitioners and expanding scope of mental health service providers to include community-based mental healthcare programme.

“A budget of R10m has been budgeted for recruitment of mental healthcare practitioners for this financial year. The appointments will be made before the end of the current financial year,” said the provincial Health MEC Helen Sauls-August.

For the current financial year, the department said it will focus on recruiting psychologists and registered counsellors to implement the community-based mental health programme.

Among the practitioners to be recruited are three psychiatrists, 20 psychiatric nurses, four psychologists and 16 registered counsellors.

The recruitment drive follows the release of a report titled “Investigation into allegations of patient mismanagement and patient right’s violations at the Tower Psychiatric Hospital and Psychological Rehabilitation Centre (TPHPRC)”.

The investigation was instituted following allegations that TPHPRC was accused of violating patient's rights by psychiatrist, Dr Kiran Sukeri, who laid a complaint with the provincial department.

In his report, Makgoba found that Sukeri, grossly exaggerated the happenings at the hospital, but acknowledged that there is a need for the provincial department to prioritise mental healthcare.

In addition, to the recruitments, the department is also processing for a new bid for provision of chronic mental health services, persons with severe mental health and disabilities and community based rehabilitation services.

"Improving mental health facilities is receiving high priority this financial year and this has been translated into increasing the number of mental reviews boards from three to five to cover the five regional geographic areas.

"Going forward the department is responding to great demand for acute mental beds and upgrading mental health care facilities across the province," said the MEC.

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