

Comprehensive report: KwaZulu-Natal Health facility issues

The PSA is actively assessing the current state of healthcare facilities and is gathering comprehensive reports to address service-delivery challenges, health and safety concerns, and working conditions. Members are requested to provide detailed reports on the following issues:

Staffing and service-delivery challenges

Shortage of healthcare workers

- Categories affected (e.g., doctors, nurses, pharmacists, cleaners, security personnel).
- Length of shortages (specify in days, weeks, months, or years).
- Specific wards or departments most affected (e.g., ICU, maternity, emergency, pharmacy).
- Impact on patient care owing to shortages (e.g., increased waiting times, reduced quality of care).

Impact on patient care

- Delays in patient treatment and appointments.
- Reports of missed patient appointments, rescheduled surgeries, and overcrowded waiting areas.
- Patient complaints regarding long waiting times or lack of attention.

Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs)

- Current employment status (permanent vs temporary).
- Working conditions, including transport and safety issues in the community.

High patient-to-staff ratios

- Ratios for key healthcare positions (e.g., nurses per patient, doctors per patient).
- Impact of high ratios on service delivery and staff morale.

Medication and equipment availability

Medication stockouts

- List essential medications that are consistently out of stock.
- Duration of shortages (e.g., how many days/weeks/months medications have been unavailable).
- Specific areas impacted (e.g., chronic medication, antibiotics, pain management).

Availability of medical equipment

- List critical equipment (e.g., ventilators, dialysis machines, ultrasound machines, ECGs) and their functionality status.

- Reports of broken or outdated equipment.
- Availability of replacement parts or service contracts for equipment.

Medical consumables and supplies

- Availability of basic supplies (e.g., syringes, bandages, gloves, IV fluids).
- Any reports of stockouts of basic consumables affecting patient care.
- Issues with the procurement process and delays in receiving supplies.

Ambulance availability

- Functionality of ambulances, including maintenance issues.
- Shortage of ambulances or delayed responses in emergencies.
- Reports of lengthy delays in transferring patients between facilities.

Occupational health and safety (OHS) compliance

PPE availability and usage

- Reports on availability and quality of PPE (e.g., masks, gloves, gowns, face shields).
- Instances where PPE is not being provided or used correctly.
- Concerns regarding infection control and sanitation practices.

Workplace hazards

- Reports of hazardous conditions (e.g., exposed wires, mold, poor ventilation).
- Instances of staff exposure to infectious diseases or hazardous substances.
- Availability of first-aid kits and emergency response protocols.

OHS committee functionality

- Is there an active OHS committee in your facility?
- Frequency of meetings and effectiveness in addressing concerns.
- Reports of staff or union members being excluded from safety protocols.

Workplace violence and staff safety

- Reports of violence or threats against healthcare workers (e.g., physical assaults, verbal abuse from patients or visitors).
- Security measures in place (e.g., guards, security cameras, panic buttons).
- Reports of staff safety concerns in particular wards or departments.

Infrastructure and basic services

Facility maintenance

- Reports of major infrastructure problems (e.g., leaking roofs, broken lifts, faulty air conditioning).
- Condition of patient areas (e.g., waiting rooms, examination rooms, wards).
- Impact of poor infrastructure on patient care and staff wellbeing.

Water supply interruptions

- Duration and frequency of water interruptions (e.g., hours, days, or weeks without water).
- Areas most affected (e.g., patient wards, kitchens, restrooms).
- Impact on hygiene and patient care during water shortages.

Electricity supply and generator functionality

- Reliability of electricity supply and occurrence of power outages.
- Functionality of backup generators during power cuts.
- Effect of power outages on critical services (e.g., lighting, medical equipment, refrigerators for medications).

Toilets and sanitation

- Availability and cleanliness of toilet facilities for both staff and patients.
- Reports of overflowing or dysfunctional toilets.
- Availability of soap, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper.

Management and governance

Acting senior managers

- List of senior managers in acting positions (e.g., CEO, hospital directors, department heads).
- Duration of acting roles and any concerns regarding the stability of leadership.
- Impact of acting roles on facility decision-making and staff morale.

Leadership vacancies

- Report any unfilled permanent leadership positions and the impact on facility operations.
- Challenges faced by staff owing to a lack of permanent leadership.

Employment equity

- Compliance with employment equity policies (e.g., racial, gender, disability representation).
- Concerns regarding unfair hiring practices or discrimination in promotions.

Human resources and labour issues

Unresolved grievances

- List of unresolved grievances and the length of time these been pending.
- Nature of grievances (e.g., unfair treatment, disciplinary issues, discrimination).
- Impact of unresolved grievances on staff morale and service delivery.

Outstanding payments

- Any reports of unpaid overtime, salaries, or allowances.
- Duration of non-payment and its impact on staff.
- Issues with payment to contract workers and service providers.

Workplace bullying and harassment

- Incidents of bullying, harassment, or victimisation in the workplace.
- Steps taken by management to address these issues.
- Reports of staff leaving owing to toxic work environments.

Financial and service provider issues

Unpaid service providers

- List of unpaid service providers (e.g., cleaning companies, security, maintenance).
- Duration of non-payment and the impact on service delivery.
- Reports of services being halted owing to financial disputes.

Procurement delays

- Issues with timely procurement of medical supplies, equipment, and other essential services.
- Impact of procurement delays on patient care and staff workload.

Corruption or financial mismanagement

- Any reports of corruption, misappropriation of funds, or financial mismanagement in the facility.
- Details of any investigations or actions taken to address financial misconduct.

ACTION REQUIRED

PSA members are urgently requested to report these issues through their shop stewards or directly to the PSA Provincial Office. Your comprehensive feedback will be essential in the PSA's advocacy and efforts to improve working conditions, healthcare delivery, and safety in facilities.

Send information to thabani.mdluli@psa.co.za / WhatsApp 078 791 4630 or pam.naidu@psa.co.za. For urgent matters, please contact the PSA Provincial Office directly.

To join the PSA, please contact PSA Provincial Organisers:

- Xolani Dhlamini - 073 813 9646 / xolani.dhlamini@psa.co.za
- Nkosephayo Zulu - 082 880 8994 / nkosephayo.zulu@psa.co.za
- Nkosinathi Thwala - 082 880 8953 Nkosinathi.thwala@psa.co.za

Alternatively, contact the full-time shop stewards: Ernest Mkhize - 081 016 5028, Nondumiso Mvubu - 081 016 5024, Jabulani Bukhosi - 063 737 8498, or Sthembile Ngcobo - 081 016 5085.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER