

URGENT

Attention: Mr Biyela

Head of Department, Gauteng Department of Health

By email: Ndoda.Biyela@gauteng.gov.za

Dear Mr Biyela

Shortages of food for patients at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital

Introduction

1. We address the letter to you as Head of Department and the accounting officer of the Gauteng Department of Health.
2. We act in the interest of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and in the interest of users of Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital. The TAC is a social movement, with a mission to conduct monitoring, advocacy and campaigning within the health care system to ensure that everyone has access to quality health care services. TAC Gauteng monitors the availability of health services in the public health care system in Gauteng.

Reports of shortages of food

3. We have received extremely disturbing reports that the companies contracted to supply food and bread to the hospital have halted delivery of these supplies due to the non-payment of outstanding accounts. We understand that no deliveries have been made for the last three days. We are aware that patients have been provided insufficient food today and it is uncertain as to when the matter will be resolved so that food and bread supplies can return to normal. We understand that this state of affairs is affecting many of the patients in the care and custody of the hospital, and will continue to affect large numbers of patients should the situation persist. According to a notice issued today by the hospital's

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Department of Human Nutrition, “the lunch meal will be soup only for all diets, except P0, P4, P4D, L1 and Q2 diet. Supper will be the normal plated meals. This department has to take these steps due to the fact the company supplying Plates to Cook Freeze Masakhane was not paid and will only delivery once their account has been paid.”

Violation of rights

4. Charlotte Maxeke Hospital is a Central Hospital providing level 2 and 3 health services to patients across the Province and neighbouring provinces. Patients in all the wards in the hospital are there to receive specialist care and some are particularly vulnerable because they have either undergone specialist medical treatment or are awaiting such treatment. They require the highest levels of care and regard in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the National Health Act, 61 of 2003, and in line with the duty of care expected of every health care provider in their respective disciplines.

5. Food is a basic human need. To deny vulnerable patients access to food whilst in the care and custody of the hospital is an outrage and a clear violation of their rights to access to health care services and to sufficient food in terms of section 27 of the Constitution as well as their rights to human dignity and equality.

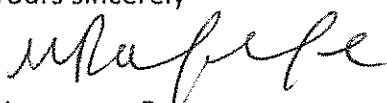
Request for information

6. In light of the urgent situation that has developed regarding food at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital, the TAC requests answers to the following questions:
 - 6.1. Is there a shortage of food supplies for patients under the care of the hospital?
 - 6.2. Which companies are contracted to supply food and bread to the hospital?
 - 6.3. Have the suppliers for food and bread been paid in accordance with the Treasury Regulations requiring payment of invoices within 30 days?
 - 6.4. If not, what is the outstanding amount owed to each of the suppliers?
 - 6.5. When will the outstanding invoices be paid? Please provide dates.
 - 6.6. Has the hospital negotiated payment arrangements with each supplier to ensure uninterrupted supply of food and bread?

6.7. In the interim, what is the hospital's contingency plan to ensure that patients receive sufficient food whilst in the care and custody of Charlotte Maxeke Hospital?

7. Kindly provide answers to the above questions urgently but by no later than 14h00 on 10 May 2013.

Yours sincerely



Umunyana Rugege

Attorney

SECTION27

CC: Mrs Bogoshi

CEO, Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital

Fax: 011 643 1612