

Gauteng Health MEC 100 Days: The challenges are well known, but they aren't insurmountable' HealthNews 10th September 2019

| [Thabo Molelekwa](#)

The Gauteng health department's progress report on its new leadership includes some key achievements such as appointing 14 CEOs in the province's hospitals and an app to deal with patient complaints.

Gauteng MEC for Health [Dr Bandile Masuku](#) says his initial days in office involved "listening" roadshows with staff, patients and the province's residents. Masuku admits that the country's largest health system still has enormous challenges, however, there are plenty of opportunities and pockets of excellence.

The province's premier [David Makhura](#) also admitted there are still some challenges in the public health system during his unannounced visits to public health facilities with Masuku. He pledged Masuku has 100 days to develop solid plans that will resolve healthcare challenges in the province.

Speaking at his first 100 days at an official press conference in Soweto, Masuku says that the challenges are well known, but they aren't insurmountable. The department has put in place a five-year plan to pursue priorities such as rolling out the [National Health Insurance \(NHI\)](#), improving patients' experience, staff morale and health services as well as health promotion to create awareness and mobilise the public towards healthy lifestyles.

Gauteng facilities 'NHI ready'

"We have set ourselves the ambitious goal of building a people-centred, clinician-led and stakeholder-driven healthcare system," he says.

Masuku says the province has 293 ideal clinics that are "NHI ready" and 24-hour community health centres will be fully functional across the province by the end of 2019.

The health department took the opportunity to also officially launch the uMpilo application, which will handle complaints from people who use public clinics and hospitals. The app is earmarked to start on 13 September 2019.

Masuku's first days in office involved putting out fires of complaints from unhappy healthcare users who often took to social media to complain about the treatment they or loved ones had received at facilities as well as the [sporadic shortages of HIV drugs](#) at clinics across the province.

"Patients will be able to report anything. It can be staff attitudes, infrastructure, patient experience, patients and staff safety," Chief Information Officer Solly Cave explains. The app automatically populates a person's location and then the complainant is able to articulate their issue after their location has been recorded, he adds.

“The patients have a choice to report anonymously... When submitted, the complaint goes straight to the backend where quality assurance team will receive and start working on it,” Cave says.

According to him, people will also be able to use the app to get information about any health facility in Gauteng, such as who is the CEO of a hospital in their area.

Filling of critical posts

Masuku says his first three months in office has allowed the department to set the tone and gain deeper insights about the province’s health system.

“We have held forums and meetings that afford our various health partners the opportunity to shape and inform our policy and programmes on topics such as the Health Market Inquiry and its implications for the NHI, youth and reproductive health, the role of private and public sector health professionals in improving health outcomes,” he adds.

Masuku has also completed shortlisting for 14 hospital CEOs and most are scheduled to start working in October. Funds to fill critical posts have also been allocated, he adds.

“A total of 1 974 posts will be filled by the end of this financial year. Most of these to be filled by the end of this year.” – Health-e News