

REPORT ON THE VISIT TO LIMPOPO PROVINCE – VHEMBE HEALTH DISTRICT ON 16 MAY 2018

INTRODUCTION

1. The National Department of Health received several complaints regarding lack of responses from Limpopo Department of Health to community requests with regards to the construction and upgrading/renovations of the clinics in various villages.
2. Numerous efforts were made to intervene by the office of the Chief Director-DHS at National Department of Health in this situation by working with the provincial counterparts, without success. Subsequently, Ms Yvonne Mokgalagadi, Technical Assistant: PHC, was assigned by Mr Morewane, Chief Director: District Health Systems Support to visit some of these communities, and recently the visit was focused on Matsakali and Dumela villages in Vhembe Health District.
3. The visit took the form of meetings with the leaders/complainants from these villages. These meetings were held on 16 May 2018. Ms Mokgalagadi was accompanied by two managers from Vhembe District who were duly delegated by Mr Hakamela, PHC: Manager in Vhembe District.
4. The methodology used during the visit included verbal presentations by community representatives followed by extensive discussions of the identified issues and walkabout in identified sites for new clinics to be built.
5. The following was gathered from the visit in each village.

Matsakali Village

6. An application for a clinic was made in 2006. Following this application, there was a participation process in 2006 to listen to the views of the communities about the application for the clinics. In 2010 there was confirmation by Office of the MEC that a clinic will be built for the community, but unfortunately there is no record of such confirmation.

7. On 06 September 2017 the community was visited by Mr Hakamela, PHC Manager of Vhembe Health District who advised them to submit a new application which would exclude other villages, such as Merve. Following this encounter, there was a stakeholder consultation session with Traditional Leaders from affected villages and an agreement was reached, whereby Matsakali was chosen as a central location suitable for a clinic to be built.
8. The village subsequently submitted a new application to Mr Nengudza (Director: PHC) as advised. The application was later submitted to Dr D Ntsoane, Provincial Project Plan (PPP) Office who confirmed receipt thereof on 08 Sept 2017. There has not been any response from that office since the application was submitted. This delay led to the inability of Vhembe Municipality to include the new facility in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).
9. Currently communities access health services at Malamulele Hospital and mobile clinic service which visits the area twice a month. The mobile service has limitations in that not all services are offered in line with the PHC package due to lack of capacity etc e.g. Ante-natal care where space is needed for pregnant women need to be examined and access to ARVs.
10. Generally, an observation made is that there is inadequate feedback provided to stakeholders as the community claims that as Shangaans, they are sidelined by the Department.

Dumela village

11. The background presented is that in 1994, there was an application for Community Health Centre (CHC) for the village. Approval was granted by the Limpopo Provincial Department of Health, and just like in the case of Matsakali village, there is not trace of that approval letter. When the team made a follow-up with the provincial office, they were informed by the late Ms Mahlo, the former Provincial PHC Manager (telephonically and via email) that construction of the health facility will commence by the end of 2014, but nothing has happened so far.

12. The NDoH, infrastructure unit also made several promises of the construction of the clinics. Some of the options that were presented by NDoH included that the project will be funded by the province or NDoH. This is contained in the report that was presented by Mr Nengudza, which also has site identification. This was also not realized due to budget constraints as a result of the province being placed under section 100 of the constitution of the country.
13. In 2016, Vhembe District delegation led by Mr Hakamela visited the community and confirmed awareness of the approval of the application, but could not find a copy.
14. In 2017 the Provincial office requested that Mr Nengudza compile a report as mandated and that he should arrange a meeting with the Chief Whip of the Municipality. This meeting was nullified because it was not correctly arranged, as it was supposed to be arranged by the office of the Mayor.
15. Mr Ramawa, the Chief Director: Infrastructure from provincial office suggested that a motivation be written from the Municipality and the Health District, so that the project can be included in the infrastructure provincial plans.
16. The report was sent to the province and then the NDoH on 5 May 2017. The community alleges that a list of (5) clinics, including Dumela was given as part of the projects. The community requires a project plan to be urgently communicated.
17. Furthermore, it was noted that CHW programme including HBC funded from HIV Grant remains unresolved, especially where there is no payment of care workers. The community requests that Mr Ramalata at the district level must address community members about this matter. Ms Yvonne Mokgalagadi will provide a copy of the WBPHCOT policy and implementation plan once

approved, so that the community has a better context when dealing with the matter.

18. The area is serviced through the mobile clinic, which is also running the school health services. This mobile clinic visits the area twice per month with separate services, one for children and one for patients with chronic illnesses.
19. A further engagement was made with Vhembe Health District on 28/05/2018 and it was noted that there is a situational analysis report that is being prepared for the DDG: Health Service Delivery (Dr Dombo) and will be submitted on 30/05/2018.
20. A response was subsequently sent to community representatives by Ms Yvonne Mokgalagadi via email (27/05/2018) that there was a fruitful discussion with the district and the matter was escalated to the provincial office, with which the NDoH: DHS will continue to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. A costed plan on all health services rendered in the province be developed.
2. The Limpopo Provincial Health Department prioritises PHC facilities for Dumela and Matsakali villages because of their distances from the nearest health facilities, and their histories of applications for such facilities.
3. Another programme to be strengthened is CCMDD to improve access of medicines for stable chronic patients.
4. Close monitoring of mobile health services to be done.
5. Feedback to communities should be improved due to the negative impact on service delivery across all levels of the health system in the province.

Compiled by:

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