

Modernised community clinic provides improved eye health services

A renovated clinic in Lenasia South, with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment and the dedicated operating theatre, will assist in the reduction of the cataract backlog at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital St John's Eye Hospital.



Gauteng Health MEC Gwen Ramokgopa chats to patient, Elisabeth Mkgoti

The clinic, which offers access to comprehensive eye health services for patients, was renovated through an investment of R3,6m by Truworths in collaboration with international NGO, Orbis Africa.

The facility will also offer access to professional eye screening by nursing personnel, an optometrist as well as an ophthalmologist in Lenasia South Community Health Centre (CHC) and contribute to the overall increase in the provincial cataract surgery offering's rate.

"I am pleased with the contribution that our private partners have made, and this is a perfect example of what can be achieved for the benefit of communities when government and the private sector join hands in improving the lives of the people", said Gauteng Department of Health MEC, Dr Gwen Ramokgopa.

About 50% of all preventable blindness is due to cataracts, but the number of people who are blind as a result of cataracts, refractive error and glaucoma is increasing every year.

“Cataract surgery is a common and usually safe procedure which can be performed to people of all ages wherein the lens is removed, and a new lens is implanted to restore vision. Following this procedure, vision is restored immediately,” she said.

“The waiting time for cataract surgery in the four academic hospitals (Steve Biko Academic, Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic, Dr George Mukhari Academic and Steve Biko Academic) ranges from one to two years. And the main challenge in these academic hospitals is theatre time because cataract surgery competes with other complications and emergencies.

It is in this light that the department is keen on establishing dedicated cataract surgery theatres in district hospitals to reduce waiting times for surgery within academic hospitals”, concluded Ramokgopa.

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