

Helderberg Hospice accredited a fifth time

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Sheer grit and determination on behalf of all members of staff at the Helderberg Hospice in Somerset West in the Western Cape was required, and delivered, for the facility to receive its fifth accreditation in the middle of a global pandemic. The accreditation means that the hospice meets robust international standards as determined by the Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (Cohsasa).



The hard work of all staff members of Helderberg Hospice paid off when the facility achieved its fifth accreditation from Cohsasa – a remarkable achievement in the middle of a pandemic.

The CEO of Cohsasa, Jacqui Stewart, is on record as saying that accreditation is not a sprint - it is a marathon, and in the case of Helderberg Hospice, the journey has been 14 years in the making from their first entry into the quality improvement and accreditation programme. Accreditation is not easy to achieve and it takes even longer to get to a point where quality improvement is simply a way of being in any institution. From the time Helderberg Hospice entered the programme in May 2006, it has achieved a two-year full accreditation and four three-year accreditations. The current accreditation is valid until August 2023.

Commenting on their latest accreditation, CEO of the Helderberg Hospice, Gail Sykes said: "Every staff member of Helderberg Hospice has been involved, to a greater or lesser degree, helping us attain our Cohsasa accreditation. Our organisation has followed the accreditation guidelines for many years and used it as a living template in order to ensure good governance and the best practices in every department. We have always been of the opinion that it must work for us and not the other way around – we cannot afford to window-dress any situation and that has, therefore, never been the case. The process itself is ongoing and we refer to the standards and resultant policies on a daily basis, ensuring that all protocols are followed.

"We must be one of the few organisations that had their final survey directly affected by the Covid-19 virus and resultant lockdown! Our external survey was scheduled to start on 24 March 2020, so with the announcement of the complete lockdown due to commence at midnight on 26 March, our survey had to be postponed at the very last minute. Accommodation and travel plans had to be changed and a new date requested. Our final survey eventually started on 14 July and we were all very pleased to finally reach a conclusion.

"We, as an organisation, are all very proud of our international Cohsasa accreditation."

Stewart, commenting on conducting external surveys at this taxing time said: "We had to ensure that the environment would be safe for the surveyors. The team at Helderberg was able to do this and the surveyors were able to see all that they needed to. It is the only onsite activity that we have been able to do since March. I congratulate the Helderberg Hospice

team on their achievement, which is great for their patients.”

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The Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA), a not-for-profit organisation in Cape Town, South Africa, assists a wide range of healthcare facilities to meet and maintain quality standards.

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