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**MINISTRY**

**JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTRY QUESTION NO: 1100**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 24 MARCH 2023**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 07 APRIL 2023**

**Prof C.T Msimang (IFP) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

(1) Whether, with reference to reports that inmates at Pollsmoor Prison were forced to suffer without the services of a Dentist for almost a year, his department has been able to provide each prison with adequate dental care; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether his Department has any plans in place to employ an increased number of dental practitioners for various prisons; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW1214E**

**DRAFT REPLY:**

(1) The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) does not have any Dentist appointed on a permanent basis. In ensuring the availability of dental care services to inmates, a service level agreement or contract is entered into with the Provincial Department of Health and/or with individual private dentist(s) on an annual basis. Inmates at Pollsmoor Correctional Centre had access to dental services provided through a visiting sessional dentist on a weekly basis and when the services of the visiting dentist were not available during the COVID-19 pandemic period, inmates that were requiring those services were referred to the Provincial Department of Health’s local facilities i.e. the Department of Health’s facilities in the same district as the correctional facility.

Other correctional facilities in the region where service level agreements or contracts could not be entered into with individual private Dentists, the local Department of Health facilities are utilised for referring inmates requiring dental services in addressing their respective dental care needs. This arrangement is facilitating the humane treatment of inmates by ensuring accessibility of continual dental health care services.

(2) The DCS does not employ dentists on a permanent basis as this category of health professionals are specialists and are not available or catered for in the DCS organisational structure. In facilitating that the inmate population has continual access to dental care services, the following measures have been put in place to ensure that the health of the inmate population is not compromised:

DCS Regions have entered into various service level agreements or contracts with either the Provincial Departments of Health for the delivery of dental health care services to the inmates on sessional basis depending on the identified needs, or where capacity in the Department of Health is limited, service level agreements have been entered into with individual private dentists to render.

**END**