# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTENREPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1609**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26)**

**Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

With reference to his reply to question 1685 on 18 December 2019, what (a) total number of complaints have been received from patients (i) in each month in the past three financial years and (ii) since 1 April 2020 and (b)(i) measures and/or processes are in place to ensure that complaints are addressed and resolved and (ii)(aa) timeframes and (bb) deadlines have been put in place in this regard?

###### NW1993E

**REPLY:**

1. (i) Total number of complaints for 2018/19 and 2019/20

The National Department of Health (NDoH) has developed a web-based application to assist public health facilities to comply with the *National Guideline to Manage Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions in the Public Health Sector.* The number of complaints as set out in the tables below are according to the web-based application which came into effect on 1 April 2018. It is important to note that not all health facilities are reporting on the system yet, therefore the number of complaints reflect those health facilities that are reporting complaints on the web-based application.

| Month | # Complaints received 2018/19 | # Complaints received 2019/20 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| April | 1934 | 2409 |
| May | 2065 | 2664 |
| June | 1720 | 2129 |
| July | 1859 | 2373 |
| August | 1973 | 2396 |
| September | 1875 | 2116 |
| October | 2053 | 2345 |
| November | 1961 | 1889 |
| December | 1219 | 1330 |
| January | 2058 | 2033 |
| February | 2164 | 2098 |
| March | 2118 | 1740 |
| TOTAL | 22999 | 25522 |

(ii) Total number of complaints from 1 April to 31 July 2020

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Month | # Complaints received 1 April 2020 to 31 July 2020 |
| April | 960 |
| May | 1021 |
| June | 936 |
| July | 736 |
| TOTAL | 3653 |

1. (i) Measures and/or processes are in place to ensure complaints are addressed

The National Health Act (Act 61 of 2003) stipulates in Section 18 that, (i) any person may lay a complaint about the manner in which he or she was treated at a health establishment and have the complaint investigated. To this effect the National Department of Health (NDoH) published the *National Guideline to Manage Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions in the Public Health Sector* which came into effect on 1 April 2018. Provincial workshops were held in November and December 2017 to train staff on the implementation of the *Guideline*. According to the Guideline a complaint is defined as the dissatisfaction, displeasure, disapproval or discontent expressed verbally or in writing by any person about the specific health services being rendered and or care being provided within the health sector.

The National Health Act, 2003 was amended in 2013 to make provision for the establishment of the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC). The objects of the Office are to protect and promote the health and safety of users of health services by:

* monitoring and enforcing compliance with prescribed norms and standards
* ensuring effective management of complaints relating to non-compliance with norms and standards through a Health Ombud.

The first Health Ombud*,* Professor Malegapuru William Makgoba*,* was appointed on 1 June 2016.

(ii) Time frames and deadline that have been put in place.

According to the *National Guideline to Manage Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions in the Public Health Sector*, complaints must be resolved within 25 working days.

The National Guideline stipulates that complaints should be lodged at the point of care, i.e. the public health facility where the incident took place. Should the complainant feel that the facility has not addressed his/her concern to their satisfaction, he/she may escalate the complaint in writing to the relevant District Office or the Provincial Health Department. As a last resort when complainants are still aggrieved with the outcome of the District Office or Provincial Health Department’s investigation, they can lodge their complaint with the Health Ombud within the OHSC.

END.