# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2895**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 50)**

**Dr S S Thembekwayo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) What has he found to be the state of psychiatric care in the Republic since the beginning of COVID-19;

(2) whether his department has reprioritised resources away from psychiatric care to COVID-19 related functions; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what impact has the reprioritisation of resources had on psychiatric patients?

###### NW3720E

**REPLY:**

(1) The Department of Health has not conducted a review on the state of psychiatric care since the beginning of COVID-19. The last formal review of the state of psychiatric care in the Republic was conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and a report was released in March 2019. The report is publicly available. The report remains instructive and the main source of information on the state of psychiatric care.

The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have derailed the implementation of the recommendations by the SAHRC, which we have committed to implement to ensure that the status core changes for the better.

The Department utilises information collected through the District Health Information System to track utilization of mental health services at primary health care, admissions to inpatient mental health units in general hospitals, and bed utilization rates in specialized psychiatric hospitals. The tables below provide information on these selected indicators showing the status in psychiatric care pre COVID-19 and during COVID-19:

**Table 1: DHIS data on the number of clients of all ages seen at ambulatory (non-inpatient) services for mental health conditions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EC** | **Free State** | **Gauteng** | **KZN** | **Limpopo** | **MPU** | **NC** |
|  | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** |
| March | 29840 | 29855 | 14651 | 14259 | 41382 | 42768 | 39671 | 40389 | 33666 | 32210 | 11753 | 13463 | 5071 | 4645 |
| April | 31015 | 23721 | 14047 | 10312 | 44560 | 36605 | 41869 | 36894 | 32321 | 21158 | 12146 | 9022 | 5047 | 4168 |
| May | 31638 | 22990 | 15076 | 9055 | 45034 | 35622 | 44029 | 35475 | 34513 | 18936 | 14934 | 10726 | 4958 | 4385 |
| June | 28330 | 21425 | 13371 | 8135 | 40419 | 37720 | 41605 | 37824 | 32319 | 21165 | 12895 | 10548 | 4303 | 4347 |
| July | 31233 | 24569 | 15130 | 7775 | 50316 | 40393 | 45163 | 37608 | 33467 | 19947 | 6476 | 8175 | 5797 | 4638 |
| Aug | 30232 | 23244 | 15470 | 8354 | 45517 | 40886 | 42665 | 35994 | 34332 | 18466 | 16377 | 7766 | 5138 | 5118 |
| Sept | 29747 | 25839 | 14329 | 7927 | 42594 | 42635 | 40442 | 38246 | 35029 | 20838 | 17022 | 8453 | 4738 | 5021 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **NW** | **WC** |
|  | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** |
| March | 9391 | 8682 | 18591 | 20750 |
| April | 9600 | 10038 | 20447 | 14434 |
| May | 9735 | 8805 | 20710 | 12763 |
| June | 8473 | 7118 | 18592 | 14465 |
| July | 10118 | 8408 | 22773 | 15374 |
| Aug | 9714 | 7331 | 21109 | 15094 |
| Sept | 9756 | 7540 | 20920 | 16734 |

**Table 2: Number of clients of all ages admitted for mental health problems in mental health units attached to general hospitals**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | EC | Free State | Gauteng | KZN | Limpopo | MPU | NC |
|  | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **March** | 963 | 787 | 2488 | 2340 | 680 | 818 | 1049 | 1492 | 626 | 685 | 290 | 298 | 59 | 45 |
| **April** | 883 | 733 | 2232 | 2028 | 800 | 548 | 1612 | 2160 | 716 | 498 | 264 | 210 | 107 | 67 |
| **May** | 1019 | 531 | 4993 | 3236 | 912 | 628 | 1426 | 1563 | 652 | 608 | 244 | 243 | 120 | 135 |
| **June** | 909 | 561 | 4407 | 4289 | 643 | 587 | 1510 | 1381 | 614 | 570 | 201 | 196 | 100 | 51 |
| **July** | 910 | 758 | 3350 | 3923 | 801 | 630 | 1751 | 1139 | 767 | 597 | 255 | 190 | 128 | 29 |
| **Aug** | 905 | 553 | 2538 | 4019 | 736 | 764 | 1618 | 1136 | 814 | 644 | 197 | 204 | 60 | 49 |
| **Sept** | 883 | 1400 | 2291 | 4494 | 688 | 905 | 1440 | 1361 | 712 | 858 | 230 | 204 | 66 | 47 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | NW | WC |
|  | **2019** | **2020** | **2019** | **2020** |
| **March** | 194 | 205 | 1663 | 2057 |
| **April** | 205 | 164 | 1660 | 1307 |
| **May** | 182 | 175 | 1706 | 1221 |
| **June** | 306 | 188 | 1585 | 1406 |
| **July** | 360 | 226 | 1811 | 1501 |
| **Aug** | 364 | 194 | 1850 | 1468 |
| **Sept** | 235 | 218 | 1796 | 1772 |

**Table 3: National average data for the Specialised Psychiatric Hospitals Bed utilization rate (beds occupied compared to the total number of beds) (%)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019** | **2020** |
| **March** | 75.5 | 147.3 |
| **April** | 147.4 | 64.7 |
| **May** | 154.4 | 70.2 |
| **June** | 149.1 | 68.1 |
| **July** | 152.8 | 70.3 |
| **Aug** | 153.8 | 67.7 |
| **Sept** | 81.1 | 69 |

**Table 4: National average data for the Specialised Psychiatric Hospitals discharges (n)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019** | **2020** |
| **March** | 1131 | 1297 |
| **April** | 1218 | 1288 |
| **May** | 1223 | 751 |
| **June** | 1254 | 805 |
| **July** | 1255 | 824 |
| **Aug** | 1188 | 608 |
| **Sept** | 1076 | 800 |

(2) Through the equitable share, each of the nine provinces receives an allocation for the provision of health care services directly from National Treasury through the provincial treasuries. Provincial Departments of Health determine the allocation of resources to health programmes including psychiatric care. In this regard, information regarding reprioritisation of resources due to Covid-19 is currently being sourced from each of the nine Provincial Departments of Health to be able to respond to this question. The response to the Parliamentary Question will be provided in due course.

END.