# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 3340**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 39)**

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

With reference to his reply to question 862 on 25 April 2016, what is being done to assist patients who opt to sleep on benches at the Butterworth Hospital waiting for patients transport when referred to Frere and/or Cecilia Makiwane Hospitals from Butterworth Hospital?

###### NW3730E

**REPLY:**

The Province is indeed aware of this challenge and is looking at various options to alleviate this challenge. This problem arises from the fact that the Province has only got three (3) Tertiary hospitals which can be as far as 200 to 300 km from the referring hospital and can take up to five (5) hours to reach owing to the distance and terrain.

In the medium term, the Department plans to develop halfway houses, where these patients would be accommodated in a dignified manner, however owing to competing infrastructure needs, this cannot be achieved in the short term.

Furthermore, the Department is looking at organising an EMS Professional Emergency service that will be flying Scarce Professionals to out-of-reach District Hospitals, that way saving patients who have to travel to the Tertiary hospitals and thus sleeping at the referring hospitals to await transportation.

END.