# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 454**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 04)**

**Mrs M O Clarke (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) What (a) is the (i) backlog in terms of supplying eye care to the patients at Wentworth Hospital Gateway Clinic and (ii) cause of the specified backlog and (b) steps are being taken to resolve the matter;

(2) what total number of optometrists are employed at the specified clinic;

(3) whether there is a budget from which to pay salaries for the optometrists; if not, why not; if so,

(4) whether there is a backlog in terms of paying salaries for the staff; if not, why not; if so, what (a) are the (i) relevant details of and (ii) reasons for the backlog and (b) steps will be taken to remedy the situation? **NW493E**

**REPLY:**

(1) According to the KwaZulu Natal Department of Health, Wentworth Hospital Gateway clinic has a backlog on issuing of spectacles to 300 patients. The reason for the backlog is that the institution exhausted the budget for spectacles in October 2022.

(2) There is no optometrist employed at Wentworth Hospital Gateway Clinic. However, the facility receives support from a visiting optometrist who visits the hospital once a week. There is one ophthalmic nurse employed at the clinic.

(3) The hospital has no budget to fill optometrist posts, however, the Department continues to advocate for enough funds to address this problem. The budget allocated to the hospital over the past years was insufficient to create new posts.

(4) The hospital has included the filling of the optometrist post in the budget bid for 2023/24. Additional funds for spectacles have also been requested.

Further information is awaited from the Province.

END.