# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 473**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 02)**

**Mrs E R Wilson (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) What urgent measures has he put in place to ensure that (a) there are sufficient and appropriately trained (i) nurses and (ii) doctors in all facilities, (b) there are appropriate resources, (c) oxygen facilities, (d) theatres, (e) appropriate delivery rooms available to all Limpopo health facilities and (f) that babies and families that have challenged children as a result of negligence are assisted;

(2) what intervention does he intend taking to ensure that medico-legal claims are reduced and/or stopped (details furnished)?

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**REPLY:**

(1) Urgent measures

1. Despite the known challenges of a strained fiscus associated with austerity measures in place to curb public spending; the Limpopo Department of Health has continued to prioritize appointment of,

1. Nurses especially midwives in high-risk areas such as maternity wards.
2. The Department has further attracted and appointed various Medical Specialists including paediatricians and paediatric surgeons to the Tertiary Hospital Complex.
3. Each facility in the province has adequate Oxygen supply which is routinely monitored and refilled. There were some Oxygen challenges during the peak of COVID-19 second wave however same was swiftly attended to and resolved.
4. The number of theatres currently available throughout the province remains a challenge and measures have been put in place to increase capacity which include a new Central Hospital which is in the pipeline.
5. The delivery rooms require appropriately trained staff to operate optimally. The Department is addressing this by prioritizing appointment of Midwives and appropriately qualified professional nurses in various institutions across the Province.

(e)-(f) Every child in the Province has a right to access to health care, the province however prioritizes all disabled children whether as a result of fault on the part of the Department of not. Furthermore, cases of proven malpractice by the Department results in such children receiving compensation to assist such children with further care including modification of family housing to accommodate a child with a disability.

(2) Intervention

 Medical Malpractice claims have become a National crisis. A multipronged approach is required to adequately deal with this problem. It necessarily involves improving the quality of care throughout the country by having proper healthcare infrastructure supported by adequately trained healthcare professionals and a functional healthcare system. Limpopo Department of Health envisage the NHI to be a step in the right direction to address some of these challenges.

 The Department has also called for an investigation into the rise of medical negligence cases through the South African Law Reform Commission with a view to introduce legislation that will prevent the collapse of the Health Care System because of uncontrollable litigations against the state.

 The recently established intergovernmental national litigation forum is also envisaged to assist the Department in dealing with these cases appropriately.

END.