# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 739**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 09)**

**Mr W M Madisha (Cope) to ask the Minister of Health:**

Whether the Government is pursuing a vigorous policy to detect glaucoma at an early stage so that medical help can be given before any lasting damage occurs; if not, why not; if so, what has been the situation year on year during the period 1 June 2009 to 29 February 2016?

###### NW857E

**REPLY:**

Yes, Government is pursuing a vigorous policy for the early detection of Glaucoma and provision of medical intervention for those who already have the condition. As part of Government’s response to the 1999 Vision 2020 Initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and IAPB, guidelines for Eye Health were developed prioritising the five leading causes of blindness and visual impairment in South Africa, that is Cataract, Glaucoma, Diabetic retinopathy, Childhood blindness and Retractive errors. The following services/activities have taken place as part of a strategy to minimize the impact of eye health conditions and Glaucoma specifically:

* A symptom-based integrated clinical management Primary Care (PC101) guideline incorporates the detection and management of Glaucoma and other eye care conditions at a Primary Health Care (PHC) level;
* Eye Health has been integrated with all other programmes to ensure that eye health is addressed holistically and not as a vertical programme. This allows for the screening of Glaucoma on patients with conditions such as diabetes and hypertension;
* Every year, provinces organise a Glaucoma awareness week to raise awareness about the impact of Glaucoma. During the week, screening and health education on Glaucoma is provided. Different mainstream and social media are also utilised to educate the public on Glaucoma. In 2016, Glaucoma awareness week was commemorated during the week of the 6th to the 12th March 2016; and
* The following services are regularly provided at different facilities:
* Primary level - screening is conducted by PHC nurses, ophthalmic nurses and optometrists. Suspected cases of Glaucoma are referred to hospitals for further assessments and management;
* Secondary level – Ophthalmologists and Optometrists screen the eye and provide management for all Glaucoma cases that are detected. Low vision and rehabilitative services are provided to people whose vision has been irreparably damaged.
* Government has appointed a dedicated eye health person at the National Department of Health to prioritise eye health and develop strategies to eliminate avoidable blindness and visual impairment including the early detection of Glaucoma.

No records are available on specific year on year programmes run during the period 01 June 2009 to 29 February 2016.

END.