# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 890**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 16)**

**Mr N N Chirwa (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

In light of the report by the Council for Medical Schemes that mental health diseases are increasing, under-diagnosed and under-treated and that the approved budget for 2019-20 financial year only accommodates 5 000 patients on the new mental health programme to be rolled out in the current financial year, how does he plan to address (a) access, (b) awareness and (c) the shortage of mental healthcare facilities under the new programme?

**NW2040E**

###### REPLY:

(a)-(b) The National Department of Health has in place the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan 2013-2020 which is currently being implemented in all nine provinces. Progress reports obtained from provinces in 2017/18 and 2019/20 financial years show that implementation of the plan has gained traction but a lot more still needs to be done.

In addition to the implementation of the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Plan, the following have been undertaken:

- A call for expression of interest to render mental health services was made to psychologists, psychiatrists and registered counsellors. Practitioners per province have been identified for provinces to contract using the Human Resources Capacitation Fund.

- In order to improve the quality and access to mental health services a Mental Health Training Programme was developed. The programme targets health practitioners working at primary health care clinics as well as district hospitals to improve their competencies in detection of mental disorders and provision of good quality mental health care, treatment and rehabilitation. A total of 30 training workshops were conducted during this financial year reaching 920 health practitioners in 8 Provinces. This programme will be expanded in the coming financial years to train more health practitioners.

- The National Department of Health evaluated the health systems cost of mental health services and programmes in South Africa in 2018/19. This was aimed at helping us understand what we are currently spending on mental health across all service levels and the potential resource envelop to be augmented to address the key mental health service gaps. The study found that the total costs of inpatient and outpatient mental health services and known transfers for contracted hospitals and NGO mental health sevices across all nine provinces amounted to R8.37 billion in the 2016/17 financial year. This represented 5% of the total health budget in the2016/17 (provincial range: 2.1-7.7%), and equated to a national average of R180.9 per capita uninsured.

We have embarked on the second phase of the project, to determine a prioritized package of mental health services and the resource estimates that should be made available to address the gaps and implement the prioritized interventions. The “investment case for mental health” will be finalized during the course of next year.

(c) Mental health infrastructure additions, upgrades and renovations are funded through the Indirect Conditional Grant: Health Infrastructure Revitalization Grant. In the 2019/20 financial year 21 mental health infrastructure projects are funded and they are at different stages of implementation.

END.