# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 896**

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

**Mr H A Shembeni (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

Whether he has been informed of the shortage of doctors and nurses at Tonga Hospital in Nkomazi, Mpumalanga; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, by what date is it envisaged that the hospital will be fully capacitated with the required personnel?

**NW2048E**

###### REPLY:

Yes the Department is aware of shortage of doctors and nurses at Tonga Hospital. The Hospital is in a deep rural area, which makes it very difficult to recruit and retain professionals to provide services in the area.

The Hospital is currently running at 28.6% vacancy rate for doctors. There are 11 permanent doctors, 14 sessional doctors and 6 Community Service Professionals against the 35 posts for doctors on the establishment in the Hospital.

There is a greater need for nurses because the Hospital is currently running at 53.7% vacancy rate for nurses (39% vacancy rate for Professional nurses, at 32 vacancy rate for Enrolled nurses and 65% for Assistant nurses).

The Department has conducted an analysis and realised that there is a misdistribution of resources especially the nurses in Nkomazi Municipality. The sub-district is being serviced by two district hospitals, Shongwe and Tonga Hospitals, that are less than 50km apart. Shongwe is currently overstaffed, especially with professional nurses, yet their workload is very low, while Tonga is understaffed with a high workload, especially in the maternity section because of the cross-border patients.

The Department has initiated a project that will address efficiency in the two hospitals and their surrounding clinics by looking at rationalisation of resources and to distribute them more equitably. It will also consider advertising vacant posts if there is still a need to do so. According to the timelines of the project, the initiative should be completed by end of November 2019.

END.