

MEDIA RELEASE

Partnership to improve availability of medical technology in provincial hospitals

Eight of the Eastern Cape's largest hospitals are set to benefit from a public-private partnership that aims to improve the availability of essential medical technology and thereby enhance patient care at these facilities.

The partnership between the Eastern Cape Health Department and the South African Medical Technology Industry Association (SAMED) focuses on strengthening supply chain management for medical technology – that is, the purchasing of medical technology and services to maintain equipment in good working order.

“A major hospital requires an astounding range of medical technology and careful planning is needed to ensure we have critical, life-saving equipment available at all times,” said Dr Rolene Wagner, Deputy Director-General for Specialised Hospitals and Clinical Support Services in the health department. She was speaking today (2 April) in Port Elizabeth at the official launch of a pilot project involving the eight hospitals and Eastern Cape Department of Health head office.

Dr Wagner pointed out that public hospitals were also required to meet demanding standards set by Treasury in order to guard against fraud and corruption in the procurement system.

“Only true teamwork between clinicians, who understand the kind of technology that is required for patient care, and supply chain managers, who fully grasp the government tender system, can lead to having the right technology in the right hospital at the best possible price and with sound maintenance in place,” she said. “This project has already born fruit by taking teamwork within the department to a new level and building relationships with the medical technology industry.”

For a year prior to the formal launch of the pilot project, managers from participating hospitals have been working closely together to produce a strategy for improved procurement and supply chain management of medical technology. This strategy provides for:

- More careful annual planning for technology purchasing, linked to available hospital budgets.
- Sharing the load of developing highly technical tender documents among hospitals and using each other's specifications instead of “reinventing the wheel”.
- Setting standards for medical technology that apply province-wide.
- Building the high level of skill required to develop good tender documents and sound contracts, and manage the delivery of contracts.
- Moving from manual systems of supply chain management to digital solutions.

The launch of the project coincides with an intense four-day training course on procurement and supply chain management for some 70 hospital procurement and legal officers from the hospitals involved in the pilot project.

SAMED Executive Officer Tanya Vogt explained why the industry supported this venture. “Medical technology companies affiliated to SAMED do high volumes of business with public sector hospitals,” she said. “A well-functioning procurement system positively impacts on healthcare delivery to patients. It also allows for efficiencies in the operating costs and future investments into medical technology.”

“Many items of medical technology are complex and ongoing support by a supplier is often necessary to ensure the technology functions optimally and health professionals can use it correctly. We feel that it is important that this special aspect of the supplier-customer relationship is built into the public sector procurement process. We are really keen to see state hospitals getting the best possible value for their spending.”

SAMED has funded an international non-profit organisation, I+ Solutions, to facilitate the pilot project and support participating hospitals to achieve their goals. I+ Solutions specialises in enhancing supply chain management in developing countries.

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Further information for journalists:

The eight hospitals participating in the Eastern Cape supply chain strengthening pilot project are:

- Frere Hospital, East London
- Cecilia Makiwane Hospital, Mdantsane
- Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital, Mthatha
- Mthatha General Hospital, Mthatha
- Frontier Hospital, Queenstown
- Livingstone Hospital, Port Elizabeth
- Port Elizabeth Provincial Hospital
- Dora Nginza Hospital, Port Elizabeth

About [SAMED](#):

The South African Medical Technology Industry Association (SAMED) is the voice of the South African medical technology industry. The association was formed in 1985 and aims to provide members with a collective, objective and credible platform to engage with stakeholders. SAMED's members include individual medical technology companies, associated members and associations.

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