

ECDOH & SMILE FOUNDATION MAKING AN IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S LIVES AND BRINGING SMILES



15 lifechanging surgeries were completed successfully during the Smile Foundation PE Provincial Hospital Smile Week. The initiative is a joint venture between the Eastern Cape Department of Health and the Smile Foundation

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For 15 children and their families, Smile Week at PE Provincial Hospital was about far more than surgery. It was about restoring hope, building confidence and giving children the opportunity to look towards the future with renewed optimism.

The Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDOH), in partnership with the Smile Foundation, hosted the Smile Week initiative at PE Provincial Hospital, bringing specialised surgical care to children from across the province.

A total of 15 surgical procedures were performed, addressing a range of conditions, including cleft lip and bilateral cleft lip, cleft palate, central cleft with nasal deformity, ear deformities requiring reconstruction, syndactyly (joined fingers), hand and finger contractures, plexiform neurofibroma, scalp lesions or cysts, anterior fistula and tongue-tie.

While each procedure was different, the reason behind the initiative remained the same, to improve the lives of children and help them grow up with greater confidence and dignity.

For families, having access to specialised surgery can be life changing. It is not only about correcting a physical condition, but it can also help children feel more comfortable in their own skin and reduce the emotional and social challenges that can sometimes accompany visible differences.

ECDOH Director of Communications, Mr Siyanda Manana applauded the Smile Foundation for its continued partnership with the Department and its contribution to transforming the lives of children.

He also shared a touching story of a young boy who was born with a cleft lip and experienced rejection and neglect because of his condition. For his mother, seeing her child receive the surgery he needed meant more than a medical procedure but rather it represented a second chance and renewed hope.

Through the partnership between ECDOH and the Smile Foundation, the child was able to access specialised care, giving his mother the reassurance that her child could face the future with much greater confidence.



Director Communication in the Eastern Cape Department of Health, Mr Siyanda Manana, addressed the media about the importance of the partnership between the Department and Smile Foundation in making a difference in children's lives

The Smile Week initiative also highlighted the importance of looking at healthcare beyond the operating theatre. Children and their families were supported through services that included psychological support, speech therapy and occupational therapy, ensuring that their needs were addressed more holistically.

For the children who underwent surgery, the impact will extend beyond their time at the hospital. It is about being able to smile more freely, participate confidently and dream without feeling limited by a condition they were born with.

Smile Week is a reminder that behind every procedure is a child, a family and a story of hope.

Through partnerships such as these, the Eastern Cape Department of Health continues to work towards making specialised healthcare more accessible and ensuring that every child can live with dignity, confidence and hope.



Michaelah Booysen from Bethelsdorp in Gqeberha, overjoyed that her 8 month old son, Shalarco had successfully undergone the cleft palate surgery