

Eastern Cape Health Strengthens Audit Improvement Efforts Towards a Clean Audit

By Sinalo Dyalvan

The Eastern Cape Department of Health (ECDoH) held a three-day Audit Improvement Workshop from 15–17 September 2026 at the Regent Hotel in KuGompo City, bringing together stakeholders from across the Department, representatives from the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), and management at various levels of the health system, from clinics to the provincial level. The engagement follows the provinces audit outcomes of the 2025/2026 financial year, which reflected an overall unqualified audit opinion with findings, while the department's financial and nonfinancial performance received a qualified audit opinion. The workshop provided a platform for management and stakeholders to reflect on the audit findings, strengthen systems and controls, and identify practical interventions to improve both financial management and performance information, with the goal of achieving a clean audit outcome across the Department.

Deputy Director General for the department Miyazaki Nokwe explained 'the purpose of the workshop is to bring our teams together to look critically at the systems and processes that contribute to our audit outcomes and to chart a clear path towards a clean audit. We want to learn from the observations and lessons shared by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), strengthen data integrity and share best practices from facilities that have already undergone audits. It is also important that we strengthen ownership of the audit process at leadership and district level, and ensure that our policies, guidelines and clinical tools are consistently applied in our facilities. Going forward, we need to translate these discussions into action through clear action plans, daily data capturing, regular clinical audits and the use of dashboards to monitor progress. This requires collaboration across districts and the commitment of all those involved in the audit process

AGSA representative Siphokazi Makubalo highlighted specific weaknesses requiring management attention, particularly in the Department's digital health environment, where connectivity, information technology infrastructure, system utilisation, staff training and governance remain areas of concern. AGSA also reported on material irregularities relating to incorrect payments, underutilized resources, infrastructure maintenance and disciplinary processes. Recurring audit challenges were linked to weaknesses in consequence management and accountability, oversight of financial and performance reporting, document management and record-keeping, implementation of audit action plans, and infrastructure and asset management. These findings point to the need for



stronger controls, closer monitoring and greater accountability to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed and not repeated.

Acting Head of Department, Dr Mthandeki Xamlashe said “before we speak about a patient-centered department, we need to ensure that we are a people-centered department, because by the time we get to the patient, many things may have already gone wrong and become more costly to address. We need to look after our workforce, protect the integrity of our infrastructure, strengthen the commitment of Clinical Support Services and recognised staff for the work they do. At the same time, we must deal with practices that distract and weaken the system, including inconsistent discipline, favoritism and absenteeism without consequences. We collectively make up this system, and when these practices are allowed to continue, they ultimately undermine the system we are trying to strengthen. He called for continued accountability, commitment and collaboration across all levels of the health system, that strong systems and responsible management are essential to both improved audit outcomes and the delivery of quality health services to communities”.

Prof S. Moko, programme director facilitating the Audit Improvement Workshop



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DDG Nokwe outlining the purpose of the Audit Improvement Workshop and the department's focus on working towards a clean audit.



Auditor General SA representative Ms Siphokazi Makubalo, sharing audit observations and lessons to strengthen audit readiness and performance.

