

Thursday, 15 May 2025]

No 40 - 2025] SECOND SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ANNOUNCEMENTS, TABLINGS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Speaker:

Referral of bill to committee in accordance with Rule 218:

Standing Committee on the Premier and Constitutional Matters

Intergovernmental Monitoring, Support and Interventions Bill (NCOP) (proposed section 76 Bill).

TABLING

The Speaker:

Bill received from the National Council of Provinces and tabled in accordance with Rule 218:

Intergovernmental Monitoring, Support and Interventions Bill (NCOP) (proposed section 76 Bill).

Copy attached.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Report of the Standing Committee on Police Oversight, Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport on the Western Cape Public Library Services Bill [B 1–2025], dated 15 May 2025:**

The Standing Committee on Police Oversight, Community Safety, Cultural Affairs and Sport, having considered the subject of the Western Cape Public Library Services Bill [B 1–2025] referred to it in terms of Standing Rule 171, begs to report the Bill without amendments.

2. Annual Activity Report of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness for the 2024/25 financial year:

The strategic objectives of the WCPP linked to the Speaker's priorities that have an impact on committees are as follows:

Priority 1: Building a credible WCPP; and
Priority 3: Strengthening the core business.

Members:

Democratic Alliance
Booyesen, M (Chairperson)
Van Minnen, BM
Van Wyk, LD
Walters, TCR

African National Congress
Windvogel, R

Patriotic Alliance
Stephens, D R

National Coloured Congress
Jacobs, DG

Alternate Members
Bryant, DW (DA)
Masipa, NP (DA)
Johnson, P (DA)
Wessels, DJ (DA)
Bans, AP (ANC)
Ngqentsu, MB (ANC)
Lithakong, T (EFF)

1. Introduction

The mandate of the Committee is to:

- 1.1 Maintain oversight over the Executive.
- 1.2 To keep the Department of Health and Wellness accountable to it.
- 1.3 Consider and report on legislation and other matters referred to it by the Speaker.
- 1.4 Monitor the implementation of legislation.

In the fulfilment of its mandate, the Committee:

- 1.5 Facilitated public participation in the legislative and other processes of the Committee.

- 1.6 Conducted its business in a fair, open, and transparent manner.
- 1.7 Promoted cooperative governance.
- 1.8 Reported regularly to the House.

2. Reporting department

Department of Health and Wellness.

3. Overview of committee activities

Number of committee activities	15
Number of public hearings	3
Number of oversight visits	3
Number of cluster visit weeks	1
Number of international study tours	0
Number of provincial bills considered	2
Number of NCOP visit weeks	0
Number of NCOP bills considered	0
Number of committee briefing meetings	6
Workshops or conferences attended	0

4. Committee activities

On 4 July 2024, Member M. Booysen was elected as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness for the Seventh Parliament.

In August 2024, the Department of Health and Wellness briefed the Committee on its Annual Performance Plan for the 2024/25 financial year. The purpose of the briefing was to familiarise the new Members of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness in the Seventh Provincial Parliament with the Department's plans and operations for the year ahead.

In September 2024, the Department of Health and Wellness provided an in-depth briefing on the Province's mental health programmes, highlighting challenges and strategies to address mental health concerns. The presentation focused on the Department's vision and mission, emphasising a strategic approach to mental health. Key topics included a definition of mental health based on the World Health Organisation's standards, the burden of disease and mental health data for the province, available mental health services, and the prioritisation of mental healthcare in the province.

A major point of discussion was the strengthening of mental health services for infants, children and adolescents (ICAMHS). The briefing concluded with a summary of key findings and insights. The Department defined mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals realise their full potential, manage normal life stresses, work productively and contribute to their communities. It was emphasised that mental health is a collective responsibility and that understanding the continuum between mental health and mental illness is crucial. The Department highlighted that the Western Cape has the highest prevalence of mental disorders in South Africa at 39,4%. Additionally, the Department reported an increase in psychiatric admissions for individuals aged between 18 and 59 in 2022 and 2023, with substance abuse identified as a key factor in acute psychiatric admissions for adults. The Committee was also informed that adolescent admissions were also on the rise.

Towards the end of September to early October 2024, the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness, in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Social Development, conducted oversight visits to health facilities and NGOs in the Garden Route. The purpose of the visit was to assess the services provided by the health facilities in the Garden Route and to evaluate their infrastructure, staff allocation and planned renovation projects for the 2024/25 financial year. Additionally, the Committee focused on understanding the challenges faced by health facilities outside the Cape metropolitan area. During the visits it was reported that all the facilities shared common challenges, including shortages of staff, poor infrastructure, lack of resources and budget cuts. Members of the Committee posed a series of questions during the visit, all of which were duly answered.

In October 2024, the Committee deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Health and Wellness. Subsequently, in November, the Committee deliberated on Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 2–2024].

In January 2025, the Committee embarked on an unannounced oversight visit to the Khayelitsha District Hospital. The purpose of the visit was to assess the functioning of the hospital, the quality of healthcare services provided to the community, and to identify any challenges the hospital might be facing in its day-to-day operations, specifically challenges with the referral of mental health patients from the Khayelitsha District Hospital to the Lenteguur Psychiatric Hospital. The Khayelitsha District Hospital has experienced both successes and challenges, such as overcrowding in emergency rooms, understaffing and strained resources. The Committee visited the hospital to gain insights into how the hospital was managing these challenges and what improvements or interventions might be necessary. Through this visit, the Standing Committee sought to understand better the hospital's operational challenges, to review the quality of patient care and to determine if there were systemic issues that required the attention of the provincial Department of Health and Wellness. During the visit, Members posed questions, which were duly answered.

In February 2025, the Committee was briefed by the Department of Health and Wellness on the diphtheria outbreak in the province and it was also briefed by the Department on the impact of the United States of America (USA) foreign-aid cuts and the implications for healthcare in the province. The Department reported that programmes affected by the USAID cuts included voluntary male medical circumcision and TB and HIV care programmes. Several NGOs have been forced to suspend their operations, leading to disruptions in services, such as medicine distribution, testing and counselling. The reduction in funding has also led to the closure of specialised clinics, including a men's clinic and a transgender and sex worker clinic, which were funded as NPOs by the USAID funding. These closures have resulted in patient complaints and concerns over the loss of access to critical healthcare services. The Committee was informed that the closures of these clinics may be permanent. With regard to the financial impact of the funding cuts, the Committee noted that 10 NGOs have been affected directly, resulting in a total financial shortfall of R365 million for this financial year. This has had an impact on approximately 700 staff members employed by these NGOs. The Department of Health and Wellness was in discussions with the Treasury to explore options to mitigate the financial impact, although it was assumed that no services would be restored unless there was a change in the US administration's decision after the 90-day review period. The Department reiterated its commitment to managing the situation effectively, despite the challenges posed by the financial pressures and service disruptions.

Also in February 2025, the Committee conducted an unannounced visit to the Karl Bremer District Hospital. The unannounced visit to the Karl Bremer District Hospital was an effort by the Standing Committee to assess the facility's operations in real time, without any prior alterations to daily routines. This approach allows the Committee to evaluate the hospital's functioning under normal conditions and to identify areas for potential improvement. The visit also allowed for direct interaction between the Committee, hospital staff and management, facilitating a deeper understanding of the hospital's strengths and challenges. All questions posed during the visit were answered, and the visit was a success.

Furthermore, the Committee was part of the Social Cluster committees that embarked on a Cluster Visit Week to the Central Karoo in February 2025.

During the financial year under review, the Committee deliberated on the Annual Report of the Department of Health and Wellness, Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 2–2024]. In addition, the Committee also deliberated on Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2–2025].

5. Legislation

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Committee dealt with the following legislation:

5.1 Provincial bills

- 5.1.1 Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 2–2024].
- 5.1.2 Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2–2025].

5.2 NCOP bills

None.

6. Facilitation of public involvement and participation

In line with the Committee's mandate to facilitate public participation as part of the legislative process, members of the public were invited to participate in the deliberations on:

- 6.1 The Annual Report of the Department of Health and Wellness.
- 6.2 The deliberations on Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Adjustments Appropriation Bill [B 2-2024].
- 6.3 The deliberations on Vote 6: Health and Wellness in the Schedule to the Western Cape Appropriation Bill [B 2–2025].

7. Financial particulars

The Standing Committee on Health and Wellness was allocated an amount of R186 111, and the Committee spent R178 646,75 during the 2024/25 financial year, which was an underspend of R7 464,25. A large portion of the budget was spent during the joint visit of the Standing Committee on Health and Wellness and the Standing Committee on Social Development to the Garden Route. Additionally, the budget was spent on

Committee briefings and visits during the financial year under review. Furthermore, some of the funds were spent during the deliberations on the Annual Report of the Department of Health and Wellness in October 2024. The Committee spent some funds during the Cluster Visit Week to Beaufort West in February 2025.