

*Friday, 30 May 2025*

[No 9 – 2025] Second Session, Seventh Parliament

# PARLIAMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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## QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

**FRIDAY, 30 MAY 2025**

**Mr M Booyesen to ask Ms M M Wenger, Minister of Health and Wellness:**

Whether her Department is continuing the telemedicine projects initiated in 2020; if so, (a) what enhancements or changes have been introduced since their inception and (b) how many beneficiaries have been reached in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021, (iii) 2022, (iv) 2023, (v) 2024 and (vi) 2025 to date?

(245)

## RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Yes, the Department of Health and Wellness in the Western Cape has continued with telemedicine projects since their inception in 2020. The initial telehealth services were launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the scope and focus of telehealth have evolved significantly.

(a) Enhancements and changes since inception: The initial telehealth initiative (2020–2023) was focused on COVID-19 support, including general COVID-19 information and vaccine-related queries. As the pandemic response scaled down, telehealth was adapted and expanded into new programme areas.

Current ongoing telehealth initiatives, implemented through the Department of the Premier's (DOTP) Contact Centre, include:

- Revised TB Telehealth Project (commenced December 2022): Enables remote monitoring, follow-up, and patient support.
- Optometry Telehealth Initiative: Facilitates booking and follow-up for optometric services.
- Chronic Medication Collection Project: Supports patient access to repeat chronic medication.

These projects improve patient access and reduce the burden on facility-based services.

(b) The total number of inbound contacts recorded through the DOTP Contact Centre under various telehealth initiatives are detailed per financial year as follows:

Financial Year	Total Contacts
(i) 2020/21	50,556
(ii) 2021/22	230,383
(iii) 2022/23	46,652
(iv) 2023/24	20,915
(v) 2024/25	46,149
(vi) 2025/26*	11,791

\*Data for 2025/26 reflects the period from 1 April 2025 to date.

These figures reflect contact volumes across the range of initiatives listed above, including COVID-19, TB, chronic medication support, and others. While the COVID-19 lines officially closed in 2023, a small number of related inbound calls were still received thereafter.

The WCDHW remains committed to leveraging innovative solutions like telemedicine to expand access, improve patient outcomes, and support a more integrated and efficient healthcare system.

**MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

**DATE**