

27 September 2024

Response to Ground Up Media

RE: Follow-up on Life Nkanyisa Recovery Centre

Following GroundUp's earlier coverage of Life Nkanyisa's recovery centre operating sites (Brakpan and Randfontein), I would like to ask some further questions to get an update on the current situation of both sites.

May I ask that I please receive the answers by midday tomorrow (27 September 2024)? Please let me know once you have received this email.

1. There have been recent images of protestors outside the Nkanyisa Brakpan Centre asking to reopen, claiming the centre is closed and they cannot get treatment.

1.1 Is the centre currently closed for all patients, including in-house and outpatients?

1.2 Is the centre permanently closed or only temporarily? When will it reopen?

1.3 Why has the centre had to close?

1.4 Have in-house patients needed to be relocated? How many patients and where to?

1.5 Have any of the staff members been retrenched?

2. Has the Randfontein Centre also had to close? Will it be closing in the future?

3. Has Life Nkanyisa received any funding from the Department of Social Development this financial year?

4. Has the department given Life Nkanyisa any update on the investigation into the funding of the Randfontein and Brakpan Centres?

5. Has the department indicated to Life Nkanyisa at all when the investigation will come to an end?

6. In a media release in June Life Nkanyisa stated that "The Department of Social Development remains in debt to the Nkanyisa Recovery Centre NPC for the amount of R172.6m for services properly rendered to date." What is this figure sitting on now?

7. How many beds are the Randfontein and Brakpan Centres currently operating at versus at the beginning of the financial year?

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Response to Ground Up Media RE: Follow-up on Nkanyisa Recovery Centre

For the past eight years, Life Nkanyisa has, in its capacity as a service provider to Nkanyisa Recovery Centre NPC, facilitated the provision of vital substance abuse treatment to nearly 4,000 Witpoort and Randfontein vulnerable patients annually. Our dedicated team has allowed for the delivery of compassionate, patient-centred care, making a significant difference in the lives of countless individuals and families.

Life Nkanyisa, acknowledges the concerns of the protesters outside the Witpoort centre in response to its recent closure. We empathise with their anxiety and share the concerns for those who rely on these vital services.

The unfortunate closure of these sites stems from the Gauteng Department of Social Development's (GDSD) decision to cease funding the care delivered at these sites. Despite the GDSD's outstanding debt of R187 million for services already rendered over 15 months, we continued to operate to prioritise patient care in these facilities during that period.

Regrettably, after notification from the GDSD in May 2024, that the Nkanyisa Recovery Centre NPC contract would not be renewed, we had to make the difficult decision to stop providing services at the facilities. As such, new patient admissions ceased at the end of May 2024. All patients who had commenced a programme completed their treatment before both sites officially closed on 12 July 2024. The amount for the care services rendered, unfortunately, remains outstanding.

The closure has had a ripple effect, impacting not only patients but also our employees. Unfortunately, 173 jobs have been affected. We consulted all impacted employees in line with Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act, and concerted efforts to reduce redundancies have resulted in the redeployment of 35 of the impacted employees.

Since June 2024, we have on many occasions, requested a copy of the GDSD investigation report and engaged with the Department to understand the allegations purported to be in the report. This includes an official PAIA request. While we have been told that a copy of the report is being prepared for distribution to us, to date we have not received it.

Life Nkanyisa remains steadfast in its commitment to facilitating equitable, quality, cost-efficient healthcare services in partnership with the Government, as we have done for over five decades. We support the need for strong, viable public-private partnerships and have a long and proud history of serving communities across South Africa. Life Nkanyisa continues operations in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Western Cape in proud partnership with the Government.

We value our partnership with the Gauteng Government and are committed to engaging in constructive dialogue to address the funding challenges with the hope of resuming the availability of care for those who rely on the provision of these services from us in our capacity



as a service provider to the Nkanyisa Recovery Centre NPC. It is critical to find solutions to ensure that individuals struggling with substance abuse in Gauteng have access to the critical care they need and deserve.

Please attribute: Life Nkanyisa Spokesperson

Note to the editor: We kindly request that if space constraints prevent the use of our full statement, any excerpt used accurately reflects the context and overall message we are conveying. We believe it's important to present our perspective on this complex issue fairly and comprehensively.