

Hospitals buckling under pressure

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has called on government to exempt all hospitals, clinics and other health facilities from loadshedding.



Source: [Pixabay](#)

"We remain confident that a collective effort on this call will undoubtedly lead to the improvement of our healthcare services. The HPCSA will endeavour by care and diligence to guide the healthcare practitioners to protect the public," a spokesperson for the organisation said in a media statement.

"Hospitals in the country are buckling under pressure as a result of loadshedding and various stages of power outages,. This has created more strain to the already far-stretched healthcare system.

"Loadshedding has negatively impacted the provision of quality care in all our health facilities and placed an enormous strain on the health practitioners on their daily routine of work.

"Healthcare practitioners in the hospitals are unable to perform emergency surgeries timeously because of loadshedding

and this has put the lives of the patients at risk.

"These health facilities are also platforms used for undergraduates, internships and postgraduate training of health professionals who are also negatively affected by loadshedding."

More than 80% of South Africans are reliant on public healthcare services. The implementation stages of loadshedding and the lack of a robust contingency plan has proved to be catastrophic in the healthcare environment, with varied and far-reaching consequences.

Life-support machines taking strain

There are approximately 420 State-run hospitals and more than 3,000 State-run clinics across the country. While private facilities and secondary- and tertiary-level public hospitals appear to be well equipped with generator banks, power supply interruptions place critically ill patients who are dependent on life-support machines at risk.

The performance and lifespan of medical equipment and devices are negatively affected by power interruptions. On the other hand, smaller healthcare facilities including primary healthcare clinics which are not equipped with generator banks are often left in the dark.

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