



NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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FINAL MANDATE

12 September 2007

HEALTH PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

Report on the final mandate on Traditional Health Practitioners. IB 20 – 2007)

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Traditional Health Practitioners Bill was referred to the Portfolio Committee for consideration as a matter of urgency.

2. BRIEFINGS

On the 2nd August 2007, Hon T.R. Mdlalose from the NCOP came to brief the Portfolio Committee on the above bill. Present at the briefings was the Department, the Department legal unit and Legislature unit.

Provincial Department, Departmental Legal Unit and the Legislature Legal Unit.

To that effect the Portfolio Committee held public hearings throughout the Province on the 20th – 23rd August 2007, to solicit the views and inputs of relevant stakeholders and members of the community.



3. COMMENTS/INPUTS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

Registration of Traditional Health Practitioners

There was unanimous agreement that registration was important as it would give Traditional Health Practitioners official recognition and probably improve the quality of their services. Importantly, this would result in a code of conduct. Unregistered practitioners must be made to face prescribed consequences.

- It was further mentioned that "basebeletsi" be also in the broad traditional healers' definition as they are currently not mentioned.
- People performing circumcision should also be registered and be given the necessary training. This practice was seen as customary and had to be maintained.
- 'Inxibi' female circumcision also has to be registered. The other category of traditional healers, birth attendants would also have to be registered, as most of them are in the rural areas. They are closer to the people where there are no facilities closer to them. Registering such people would make life easier for majority of rural areas inhabitants.

The establishment of the Traditional Health Practitioners Council of South Africa (THPCSA)

There was support for the establishment of the Council which was envisaged to consist in bottom-up linkages, that is, representatives from the locality to the district, to the provincial and ultimately to the national.

Traditional Health Practitioners must form the core of the Traditional Health Practitioners Council of South Africa. The existing structures must continue assisting with the coordination of the Traditional Health Practitioners.

The Training and Accreditation of Traditional Health Practitioners

The public agreed that training and accreditation would benefit Traditional Health Practitioners professionally.

Access to patients in hospital

The public felt that Traditional Health Practitioners must have access to their patients in hospital. For this purpose, they suggested that designated areas be built in hospitals wherein they will treat their patients. There was however no clear agreement on the idea of separate hospitals for Traditional Health Practitioners by reason of most of them traditionally practicing from home, which was viewed by some as essential to their craft. Some associations, nonetheless, felt that they needed to be able to decide whether or not to build their own health centres wherefrom they can refer patients to hospitals and to other practitioners.

Tariffs

- It was agreed that traditional healers should charge equal tariffs, as most of them are charging exorbitant amounts.

- Government was urged to address the problem of traditional healers coming from other African countries, who are coming in to practice. These were seen as 'tsotsis' and taking advantage of sick people by charging them inflated amounts.

Establishing the interim council

- There should be an interim structure that would regulate the affairs of traditional healers.
- Furthermore, there should be a forum that would ensure that traditional healers are trained and accredited.

Training and Research

- There should be training and research for traditional healers but such should not be imposed on them but should be done in consultation with them. This was because if training and research was to be imposed on them, it would be seen as undermining them.

Facility where they can practice

- Traditional healers need a centre next to hospitals where they can easily be accessed by their patients who might be admitted in those facilities.

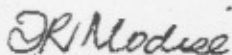
4. RECOMMENDATIONS BY COMMITTEE

- The Committee recommended that the bill should be written in different languages to ensure that everybody understand the objectives of the bill.
- People performing circumcision should also be registered and be given the necessary training.
- All traditional healers should charge equal tariffs because most of them are charging exorbitant amounts.
- The Traditional Health Practitioners should be given access to their patients in hospital.

5. RESOLUTIONS

The Portfolio Committee having considered the briefing notes and updated amendments of the Select Committee resolved that the permanent delegate should discuss in line with other provinces and therefore supports the essence and principle of the Bill.

SIGNED:



HON T.R. MODISE
SPEAKER: NWPL