

Covid-19 hospital admissions data shows multiple facilities under pressure in hotspot provinces

news24

Kyle Cowan



(Gallo Images)
Sharon Seretlo

- **Admissions in Eastern Cape hospitals account for 34% of the 15 909 new Covid-19 patients in the past month.**
- **1 005 people were admitted to hospitals around the country in just two days between 8 and 10 December.**
- **3 147 people died in hospitals between 10 November and 10 December, of which 45% were reported in Eastern Cape facilities.**

More than 15 000 new Covid-19 patients were admitted to hospitals around the country in the past 30 days, a News24 analysis of admissions data shows.

Eighty-three percent of these admissions are from just four provinces – the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

But the largest number of new hospital admissions, 45%, comes from hospitals in the Eastern Cape, particularly in Nelson Mandela Bay and Buffalo City - two areas that have seen a sharp increase in cases in the province.

As of 10 December, more than 6 500 people were admitted to hospitals around the country.

More than 13 000 patients were discharged between 10 November and 10 December.

Overall, hospitals have admitted 113 244 Covid-19 patients and reported that 86 931 have been discharged, while 19 673 died.

In the past 30 days, 3 147 deaths were reported, 16% of the total number of in-hospital deaths reported since March this year.

The admissions data, published by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), shows that a hospital built by Volkswagen South Africa, the Rev Dr Elizabeth Mamisa Chabula-Nxiweni field hospital which has a 3 300-bed capacity, admitted 1 004 new patients since 10 November.

The hospital was set up to handle an overflow of patients from existing hospitals, and it appears from the number of patients admitted to other hospitals it was a necessary intervention.

Hospitals in the Eastern Cape have also reported 1 405 deaths in the past 30 days. It is not possible to determine which hospitals have seen the most deaths, as historic data for deaths in specific hospitals is not immediately available.

News24 previously reported some hospitals in the province had seen mortality rates as high as 60%.

In the Western Cape, hospitals on the Garden Route and in the City of Cape Town account for the highest number of new Covid-19 patients.

George Hospital has seen the highest number of new admissions - 252 - while the province accounts for 20% (3 234) of new admissions for the past 30 days.

Gauteng hospitals have seen 2 624 new patients, while KwaZulu-Natal reported 1 992 new admissions since 10 November.

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize announced on Wednesday that the country had officially entered a second wave.

Criteria set by the South African Covid-19 Modelling Consortium and Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on Covid-19 in early November, which included the proportion of tests returning positive, saw the seven-day moving average rising 30% higher than the previous maximum at the peak in mid-July.

The MAC advisory setting out the criteria was published by the government [here](#).

In a statement on Thursday, Gift of the Givers chief executive Imtiaaz Sooliman quoted an unnamed hospital official as saying: "We are in deep trouble, the virus is everywhere, the hospital is full, not only the Covid-19 beds, the whole hospital, we are not allowed to give the numbers. The casualty can't cope, the queues are lengthening outside, we have to increase capacity, we have them sitting on chairs, we find many dead there. Funeral parlours, big and small have never been this busy."

The admissions data appears to correlate with this view.

While patient data is not publicly reported by data of admission and discharge - which would enable the public to determine whether hospital capacities are being exceeded.

Sooliman described multiple interventions Gift of the Givers was undertaking to help struggling healthcare workers in Eastern Cape hospitals, and said the Western Cape was also starting to show signs of strain.