

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION: 4364

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 11 JULY 2025
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 31)

Dr T K S Letlape (ActionSA) to ask the Minister of Health:

- (1) Whether his department keeps track of the total number of (a) documented and (b) undocumented foreign nationals who access public healthcare facilities; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the recorded totals for each of the past five financial years;
- (2) what total number of undocumented foreign nationals have been reported to the Department of Home Affairs by health care facilities as required by the law? NW4907E

REPLY:

- (1) (a)-(b) The provincial health departments do not keep track of the number of either documented or undocumented foreign nationals nor undocumented South Africans who access public healthcare facilities.

In accordance with Section 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, everyone has the right to access healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare, and no one may be refused emergency medical treatment. Health care is provided based on clinical need, not on nationality or documentation status.

- (2) Patients are requested to present proof of identification to ensure that for their own safety they are being treated as the individuals who they say they are. However, services are not withheld from those who are unable to do so. The patient administration and records systems utilised in public health facilities across the country do not classify or record individuals as South African or foreign and are therefore unable to provide a total number of undocumented people who accessed healthcare services over the past five years.

Many South African citizens also access healthcare without presenting identification, many of whom have no identity documents issued by Home Affairs or any other official form of identity. This makes it impossible to determine whether such undocumented patients are foreign nationals or not.

It must be realised that on the African Continent as a whole, the issue of Civil Registration and vital statistics is something that has just started in earnest recently, and the whole Continent is lagging behind. At the present moment the country with the highest Civil Registration is Egypt at 98%. The second highest is South Africa at 89%. This means that 11% of South Africans are also undocumented, but cannot said to be illegal in their own country. Some countries on this Continent are still between 1% and 5% registered.

END.