

Mandela hospital denies financial trouble claims

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THE NELSON Mandela Children's Hospital has denied reports that it's in financial trouble.

Chief executive Dr Mandisa Maholwana yesterday said the hospital was of such a high standard that it could compete with others of its kind in southern Africa and facilities around the world.

In May, the hospital received a tranche of R150 million from the government to begin operating. Maholwana said the hospital had served nearly 200 patients and had lessened critical cases of paediatric MRI waiting lists at Charlotte Maxeke and Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic hospitals.

Having expanded their scope of services for the healthcare community, children were now being diagnosed faster, and more hospitals would be added to the list, Maholwana added.

The children's hospital was expected to be fully operational by March next year.

Dr Michael Apkon, president and chief executive of the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), said: "It is not every day that you have the opportunity to build from scratch such a state-of-the art paediatric facility."

Cardiology outpatient services were imminent, and they were looking forward to making that announcement shortly, he said. This would be followed by dialysis, intensive care and surgical services.

Apkon said the hospital would approach this task with the same level of attention to detail and collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.

Patients from Charlotte Maxeke and Baragwanath hospitals come to the hospital for both MRI and CT scans. The hospital is operating with government funding of R600m over three years.

Dr Mpho Phalatse of the City of Joburg said they were honoured and inspired by the coming to life of the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital.

"As the City of Joburg, we have also made investments. We believe our children need investment," she added.

The hospital's chairperson, Phuthuma Nhleko, said: "We're looking forward to helping improve the lives of South Africa's children, our future leaders.

"We have also received tremendous support from the suppliers for training and testing of the equipment to ensure patient safety," Nhleko said.

Moholwana added: "Providing the best quality was the biggest milestone. And we hope to start improving our paediatric services to South Africa's children. All aspects of this transition from the admission of patients were planned.

"As far back as 2009, this hospital received support from the Health Department. It has been a collaborative effort with the government and referral hospital partners."