

The cost of waiting

In this round, we expanded Asivikelane Health from 10 to 25 clinics by adding additional clinics from across Buffalo City and the OR Tambo district in the Eastern Cape. The major improvements in waiting times at the 10 clinics previously reported on have been sustained, with 96% of these residents reporting that they spent less than 3 hours at the clinic. However, waiting times in the 15 new clinics are particularly poor, with 67% of residents in the OR Tambo district waiting more than 2 hours to be assisted, while 58% spent more than 3 hours at the clinic in total. Some patients told us that they even forgo clinic visits and treatment because of the long wait.

Extensive waiting times come at a significant cost to residents, most of whom live in rural and impoverished conditions. They travel long distances to clinics and the

prolonged wait steals time out of their day; time which could have been spent seeking work to meet their family's needs. Residents also risk being exposed to other infections while waiting. Women and children face a specific safety risk because public transport is limited in rural areas and travelling after hours is unsafe.

Reasons for long waiting times include the lack of medicine dispensing staff, poor patient file management, nurses taking long breaks and clinics not opening on time. **There are several low or no cost ways that clinics could address these problems**, such as

1. Pre-packaging of medications for chronic patients,
2. Efficient patient file management, and
3. Appointment booking system to reduce congestion at clinics.

GOOD NEWS

- **Themba lethu, Potsdam, Twecu, Masiphile, Berlin** and **Nqanda** clinics are doing excellent work across all indicators.
- **Needscamp** and **Potsdam** clinics saw a 33% and 20% improvement respectively in the availability of health services to residents over the last month.
- All residents who visited the 25 clinics reported that COVID-19 prevention measures were adhered to.

HOTSPOTS

- 30% of residents reported that **Needscamp** and **Ncera** clinics did not open on time.
- 60% of residents who visited **Qhuru** clinic and 30% of those who visited **Ngqeleni** clinic reported that medicine was not available.
- 40% of residents in **Newlands** and **Ncera** and 30% in **Mpongo** reported that the waiting area was not clean.

DATA NOTES: 248 residents were interviewed in the second week of September 2021, from across 25 clinics in the Buffalo City and OR Tambo Health Districts. Detailed results and comments from residents themselves are available at www.asivikelane.org/health. For more information please contact: infos@internationalbudget.org or kaugust@spf.org.za Twitter: @FoundationSmall Facebook: @smallprojectsfoundation Instagram: @spfinfo website: www.spf.org.za

ON YOUR MOST RECENT CLINIC VISIT IN THE LAST MONTH...

CLINIC NAME	...WERE YOU ASSISTED WITHIN 2 HOURS BY A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?	...DID YOU SPEND LESS THAN 3 HOURS IN TOTAL AT THE CLINIC?	...IF YOU NEEDED MEDICATION, WAS THE MEDICINE AVAILABLE FOR YOU ON THE DAY?
PHASE 1 CLINICS			
THEMBALETHU	●	●	●
NEWLANDS	●	●	●
POTSDAM	●	●	●
NEEDSCAMP	●	●	●
NCERA	●	●	●
MPONGO	●	●	●
TWECU	●	●	●
OPENSHAW	●	●	●
ZIKHOVA	●	●	●
MASIPHILE	●	●	●
PHASE 2 CLINICS			
QHURU	●	●	●
MNCOTSHO	●	●	●
ILITHA	●	●	●
TSHABO	●	●	●
BERLIN	●	●	●
NGQELENI	●	●	●
PHILANI	●	●	●
BUNTINGVILLE	●	●	●
MAQANYENI	●	●	●
NKUMANDENI	●	●	●
NTIBANE	●	●	●
NQANDA	●	●	●
CANZIBE	●	●	●
NTAPHANE	●	●	●
LUJIZWENI	●	●	●

Respondents that said YES: 60% or less 61 – 75% 75 – 89% 90% or more