

## NEWS RELEASE

### Kalafong Hospital Receives Lifesaving Water Supply Through Borehole Project by Gift of the Givers Foundation and Bonitas



*Left to right: Lee Callakoppen (Bonitas), Dr Themba Hadebe (Bonitas), Dr Imtiaz Sooliman (Gift of the Givers), Prof Priya Soma-Pillay (UP) and Dr Lebogang Mpshe (Bonitas)*

Unscheduled waters cuts that led to clinical and training challenges at the Kalafong Provincial Tertiary Hospital will now be a thing of the past.

Thanks to Gift of the Givers Foundation and Bonitas Medical Fund, the Kalafong Hospital has a borehole that will augment water supply to the University of Pretoria (UP) teaching hospital, which services a population of approximately 800 000 people, west of Pretoria. The Kalafong Hospital Borehole Project was handed over at the hospital during a ceremony attended by UP, Bonitas and Gift of the Givers Foundation officials.

“We rely on stable water supply to service patients adequately and provide a safe training environment for our students,” said Professor Priya Soma-Pillay, the Chairperson of the School of Medicine at UP.

“As the Chairperson of the School of Medicine at UP responsible for training at our health facilities, I’m grateful to Gift of the Givers Foundation and Bonitas for hearing our plight. With consistent and reliable water supply

we can ensure the health and safety of patients, staff, students and the proper functioning of medical equipment.”

The Kalafong Hospital Borehole Project is fitted with storage tanks, a pump and Ultraviolet (UV) water cleaning system to provide a secondary source for safe drinking water. The project is the result of the former acting CEO, Dr Lebogang Mpshe, the current acting CEO, Dr Olebogeng Modise, and Prof Soma-Pillay reaching out to Gift of the Givers Foundation for assistance towards the end of last year.

They explained that the frequent and unscheduled water cuts led to serious clinical challenges such as rescheduling theatre appointments which led a backlog of surgical cases; the disrupted functioning of medical equipment such as dialysis machines, ventilators and hemodialysis and a bottleneck in the hospital’s laboratory testing processes among others, which rely heavily on water.

Speaking at the launch Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, Gift of the Givers Foundation founder, said the COVID-19 pandemic magnified the challenges within the health system, and in addition, budgetary cuts and frozen posts have placed the public health sector under a strain never experienced in the last 30 years. “That’s why I like partners like Bonitas; our number one focus in South Africa is now health.”

“We had to cancel all the elective surgeries during COVID and when the patient comes back – and in the public service our patients come from far— they take the kombi, take the bus, get to the hospital and they’re told there’s no water. Imagine. The operation is suspended because there’s no water.”

“Can you imagine what it does to the moral, the psyche, the emotion of that patient? They’ve been waiting for months... hamstrung at home, not productive or fully functional, which adds to emotional and psychological trauma in their life. They look forward to the day of the operation but their heart is broken. That is why when any hospital calls me for a borehole, I make sure we try to do that first because critical things stop when there’s no water,” Dr Sooliman said.

The main objective of the partnership between Gift of the Givers and Bonitas, which dates back to 2018, is to provide healthcare interventions to vulnerable and marginalised communities. Bonitas donated R1.2 million towards the Kalafong Hospital borehole project.

“This and the other projects carried out together with Gift of the Givers, align with the scheme’s commitment to being the medical aid for South Africa,” said Lee Callakoppen, Bonitas Principal Officer. “We want to assist in the social upliftment of South Africans, particularly in the healthcare space, and who better to partner with than this leading philanthropic organisation in the country”

Dr Modise, added: “Many people say they want to help, but few actually step up to do it. The Gift of the Givers Foundation and Bonitas have stepped up with this important donation at a time that the nation is faced with a possible water crisis.”

“On behalf of Kalafong Provincial Tertiary Hospital and the community we serve, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for their selfless contribution that supports our commitment to serving the community. The borehole will contribute immensely to our quest to provide uninterrupted service delivery.”

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## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their 2024 World University Rankings (WUR). UP was the only South African university featured in the 2023 World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to [www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)