



Quarterly Bulletin

Vol 13

END OF YEAR REFLECTIONS: A NOTE FROM DR SIPHIWE MNDAWENI, THE CEO OF OHSC

As 2025 comes to an end, the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC), as a regulator of healthcare services, would like to express its gratitude to all its stakeholders across the health sector for ongoing collaboration and support in helping the OHSC fulfil its mandate to protect the quality and safety of healthcare in South Africa.

This year has been pivotal for the OHSC, marked by strategic realignment and a renewed focus on our goals. Guided by our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan and our 2025/26 Annual Performance Plan, we made significant strides to better position the organisation to support the ongoing reforms of the healthcare system.

As we reflect on the progress made to strengthen the quality and safety of healthcare services in the country, the OHSC continues to work closely with key stakeholders to refine norms and standards, improve the oversight of health establishments, and ensure accountability at all levels. Upholding national norms and standards benefits not only healthcare users but also healthcare providers by creating environments where risks are reduced, accountability is strengthened, and positive outcomes are sustained.

A significant milestone this year was the inclusion of inspections for General Practitioners (GPs) for the first time. This initiative aims to enhance compliance among health establishments at the primary care level and ensure that service providers meet the highest standards of care. By extending our oversight to GPs, we are reinforcing our commitment to a comprehensive approach to quality and safety across the healthcare spectrum. We were also pleased with the collaboration received from General Practitioners.

Looking ahead to 2026, the OHSC remains committed to deepening partnerships, strengthening regulatory capacity, and advancing a culture of compliance and continuous improvement in the health sector. The OHSC will continue to issue certificates of compliance to health establishments that meet the requirements within set timelines and publish regular compliance reports to promote transparency and trust.

On behalf of the OHSC Management and Staff, I would like to thank all our stakeholders, from Government and healthcare providers to professional bodies, civil society and all our communities, for journeying with us on the path toward quality healthcare.

We thank all healthcare workers and health establishments for their cooperation and dedication in discharging their duties.

Together, we will continue advancing safe, respectful, and patient-centred care for all.

Wishing you a safe and restorative festive season and a healthy year ahead.

DR SIPHIWE MNDAWENI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ADVANCING THE BENCHMARK FOR QUALITY HEALTHCARE: OHSC'S REVIEW OF THE NORMS AND STANDARDS REGULATIONS UNDERWAY



The OHSC, as the regulatory authority for healthcare services, is currently reviewing the norms and standards regulations that protect patients and healthcare workers by promoting safe, effective, and dignified healthcare services.

The norms and standards provide a benchmark for quality and safe healthcare services by outlining minimum service requirements, promoting consistent quality standards across all health establishments, and guiding the OHSC's inspection and compliance processes. The norms and standards support the identification of risks, drive corrective action, and promote ethical and efficient service delivery, thereby building public trust in the health system.

To ensure an inclusive and evidence-based review, a Technical Working Group (TWG) has been established, which comprises researchers, technical specialists, care providers, and patient representatives. The working group is mandated to assess the current norms and standards, evaluate emerging healthcare challenges, and develop updated standards that reflect best practice.

The revision process will follow six key steps:

1. Identifying the need to revise and introduce new standards.
2. Establishment of the Technical Working Group, which will review existing regulations and guide the development process (underway).
3. Conducting evidence-based research to inform the drafting of revised or new standards.
4. Holding broad stakeholder consultations to achieve consensus on the draft standards.
5. Securing review and input from the Standards Review Committee to ensure comprehensive coverage.
6. Finalising the revised standards through Board review, Ministerial approval at the National Health Council, a period for public comment, and subsequent promulgation.

Throughout this process, the OHSC will ensure a transparent and inclusive review process, assuring that the updated norms and standards reflect the needs of the health system and its users.

Further updates will be shared as the review progresses and stakeholder engagement unfolds.

EXPANDING OVERSIGHT: THE OHSC INSPECTS THE GENERAL PRACTICES



The OHSC regulatory framework of inspection tools has expanded to include the General Practices (GPs) inspection tool. In fulfilling its mandate, the OHSC ensures that safe, reliable, and patient-centred healthcare services are delivered to every healthcare user. To fulfil its responsibility, the OHSC began inspecting General Practitioners (GPs) in November 2025 and is now calling on all GPs to register their practices with the OHSC to facilitate this inspection process.

The OHSC recognises that navigating this uncharted territory requires collaboration with stakeholders, and it has held numerous consultations with GPs before the inspections, in the form of guidance and training workshops. These workshops aim to familiarise practitioners with the inspection tools and their requirements, aiding in a smoother inspection process and enhancing the quality of care provided to health service users.

Inspection tools are vital in the OHSC's operation, as they provide a standardised, objective framework for evaluating the quality and safety of healthcare services across healthcare establishments, ensuring consistency and fairness during inspections. They serve as a guide for both inspectors and healthcare establishments on the required norms and standards, helping to identify gaps that may impact patient outcomes. The information gathered enhances accountability, supports evidence-based regulatory decisions, and ultimately guarantees that patients receive safe, reliable, and high-quality healthcare.

Each inspection will be conducted by two inspectors, taking approximately four hours to complete. Uninterrupted patient care remains a priority, and therefore, practices are not required to close during the inspection period. However, inspectors will need appropriate support to navigate the facility and conduct an efficient inspection.

In preparation for the inspections, General Practitioners are encouraged not only to review the measures but also to familiarise themselves with the context and purpose of each requirement. The accompanying explanatory notes should be read carefully to ensure a clear understanding.

The inspection tools include several essential measures that are non-negotiable, meaning that if they are not met, it will lead to an immediate non-compliance score. These cover critical clinical areas such as the emergency trolley or bag, and the availability of oxygen or an oxygen concentrator. Due to their direct impact on clinical outcomes, all healthcare establishments must comply with these non-negotiable measures.

This enhanced oversight marks another step in ensuring that every user receives the standard of care they deserve. GPs are urged to ensure that they are prepared for the upcoming inspections and can provide the highest quality of care to their patients.

ALERT TO HEALTH ESTABLISHMENTS: RISKS OF 'WINDOW DRESSING' DURING OHSC COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS



Quality and safe healthcare are essential to protecting patients and fostering public trust in the healthcare system. Users of healthcare services depend on health establishments to deliver care that is safe and of high quality.

To support this, the OHSC, as the regulator for healthcare services, monitors health establishments to ensure that they meet the prescribed norms and standards regulations. This regulatory role is vital in ensuring patient well-being and in upholding a mission to provide consistent, high-quality care. Compliance inspections are a crucial part of the OHSC's responsibilities. These inspections help hold facilities accountable, identify areas for improvement, and foster a culture of quality and safety. Ultimately, they help protect lives and assure the public that healthcare facilities operate responsibly and transparently.

The OHSC has noted concerning incidents where some health establishments engage in “window dressing” during compliance inspections. This is achieved through temporarily borrowing medical equipment, documents, or other resources from nearby facilities to appear compliant and secure a Certificate of Compliance.

This practice is prohibited and considered unethical. It misleads the actual state of the facility's compliance readiness, risking patient safety. Window dressing damages the credibility of care, erodes public trust, and compromises the integrity of the regulatory system. A certificate of compliance should accurately represent the actual conditions and capacity, rather than a temporary display created solely for inspection purposes.

Health establishments found to be engaging in such practices will face enforcement actions that include issuing compliance notices, written warnings, fines, and withholding accreditation for NHI participation. OHSC will, in addition, conduct surprise follow-up inspections. These measures are crucial for protecting the public and maintaining the credibility of the healthcare regulatory system.

Authentic compliance is not about appearances; it is about ensuring that every patient receives safe, respectful, and quality care each day. Healthcare facilities are encouraged to work steadily towards sustainable improvements rather than quick fixes. Doing so enhances both patient outcomes and confidence in the health system.

The OHSC calls on all health establishments to commit to authentic readiness and uphold the principles of quality care. Your cooperation is essential to ensuring safe healthcare for all.



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