

NORTH WEST GUIDEBOOK FOR DISTRICT HOSPITAL MANAGERS

De Villiers M¹, Couper I², Matse M³.

Background and Objective

The North West Province commissioned the Health Systems Trust (HST) to develop a supervisory manual for district hospitals, aiming to develop a practical resource tool for hospital managers which can be used to improve the daily management and supervision of district hospitals. The HST appointed a research and development team to develop the guidebook using an extensive process of data gathering and consultation.

Methodology

A framework for the Guidebook was developed through literature reviews and interviews with key informants, producing a practical set of criteria for a successful district hospital. The various drafts of the Guidebook were distributed to experts in the field, policy makers and health services managers. A large number of reference documents were utilised throughout the process.

The Guidebook consists of 6 chapters namely: Using the Guidebook; Strategic management; Gathering and using information; Risk identification and management; Using information in developing priorities and solving problems; and Quality improvement. It includes a number of essential resource documents on a compact disc. As it is aimed to be a living document the Guidebook is bound in a loose file format with space for hospital specific notes.

The Guidebook was piloted in 4 district hospitals in the North West province. This started with an orientation workshop with the management of these 4 hospitals to introduce the aim and objectives of the Guidebook. Thereafter a series of pre-test workshops were held with each of the hospitals. Following a period of using the Guidebook in their hospitals for 6 – 8 weeks, a series of post-test workshops were conducted at each hospital.

Results

The results of the pilot and recommendations for changes to the Guidebook were presented to the North West Province at a feedback meeting and final input was obtained on the completion of the project. A final version of the Guidebook was then handed over to the Province including key recommendations from the pilot phase, which will direct the implementation phase.

¹ *University of Stellenbosch*

² *University of Witwatersrand*

³ *Health Systems Trust*