

LABOUR-PUBLIC-HASA

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PRIVATE HOSPITALS OPERATING AT FULL CAPACITY: HASA

Hospital Association of South Africa-affiliated private hospitals are operating at full capacity because of an influx of patients as a result of the public sector strike, it said on Friday.

"... Our ability to respond is, as a result, limited," said HASA chief executive officer Kurt Worrall-Clare. "At the moment, it's all hands on deck."

While state hospitals had 100,000 beds, Hasa's private hospitals had 35,000, of which 4500 were allocated to psychiatric patients, Hasa said in a statement.

Worrall-Clare said the private hospital sector was using all its available resources to ensure that seriously sick public sector patients received the appropriate treatment.

In emergency and trauma situations, state patients are transferred to the nearest open facility, "irrespective of whether they are public or private institutions".

Triage centres had been set up in some private hospitals to treat patients.

The department of health was co-ordinating the transfer of public sector patients to private hospitals, granting authorisation to the most seriously ill.

Worrall-Clare said private hospitals had had a positive response from private doctors, nurses, volunteers and hospital managers.

"Their dedication and individual contributions to patients has been beyond the call of duty and has been remarkable and moving.

"I cannot thank these men and women enough -- together with the many volunteers -- who have given up their time to help," he said.