



## **Family Digest 20**

**13<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

### **Infant Deaths at Thelle Mogorane Hospital**

During July, August and September six neonates, babies less than one month old, died as a consequence of Klebsiella infection at the Thelle Mogorane Hospital in Vosloorus, Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. The Gauteng Department of Health confirmed a Klebsiella pneumonia outbreak caused by the antibiotic-resistant bacteria in August. These infections refer to several different types of healthcare-associated infections that are all caused by the Klebsiella bacterium. The infection is typically transmitted through person-to-person contact. In healthcare settings, patients who require long courses of antibiotics and whose care requires the use of ventilators and endotracheal tubes are particularly vulnerable. The 61-bed neonatal unit at the Thelle Mogorane Hospital often admits close to 90 patients. This recently built healthcare facility is chronically understaffed, particularly in terms of registered nurses. The infected infants contracted the disease while in the neonatal unit. Most of the babies affected were/are premature and of low birth weight, making them particularly vulnerable to infection and in need of ventilators and endotracheal tubes which may well be the source of the infection.

This outbreak is a systemic problem in need of long term solutions and greater vigilance. The Provincial Department of Health was slow to respond. This is yet another tragic reminder that all is not well in the Gauteng Department of Health, and that when quality care is compromised lives are needlessly lost.

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**Lois Law**  
**Project Co-ordinator**

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