

**OPENING REMARKS FOR THE WEBINER ON TRAINING OF
HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS ON INITIAL MANAGEMENT OF
VICTIMS OF SEXUAL OFFENSES IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
FACILITIES**

KNOWLEDGE HUB

Wednesday, 15 October 2025

SPEAKING NOTES

Programme Director and Colleagues, Good morning.

It is my pleasure to be part of this webinar today on a very important and also sensitive topic of sexual assault - towards strengthening comprehensive management of the survivors of this heinous act in our primary health care facilities.

Acts of sexual assault have devastating impact, both on those who survive them and their loved ones.

It is unfortunate that we live in the times where sexual offenses are among the most frequently occurring crimes in our country affecting both males and females, young and old.

Sexual offenses are a major public health challenge.

It is therefore critical that various measures are put in place to increase skills and capacity of the frontline health care workers to ensure that victims of sexual assault that present in health facilities are managed in a humane, compassionate, trauma informed care and clinically competent manner that promotes healing, not only to ensure good treatment

outcomes but also to avoid re-traumatizing the person and ensure preservation of, and collection of evidence which is critical towards conviction of perpetrators and obtaining justice for the victim.

When we do so as health worker, we will also make it easier for other victims of sexual assault to come forward and seek help, because they will not be afraid that they will be judged, stigmatized or shamed.

The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 also known as the Criminal Law provides a legislative framework for management of sexual offenses in the country.

At a policy level within the Department of Health, the National Sexual Assault Policy, 2005 guides health care services for sexual assault and promotes a person-centered approach in service provision.

Among others, the policy requires the health care providers to not only focus on the medico-legal needs of the sexual offenses survivor, but also to their physical, mental and social health needs.

On 12 December 2023, the Health Ombudsman released a report on the outcome of an investigation that had been conducted regarding the allegations of denied care resulting in the demise of a patient at Motherwell NU11 clinic in the Eastern Cape Province.

The findings and recommendations by the Health Ombudsman necessitated the Department to review and update the content of the APC training module on the care and management of sexual assault victims presenting at primary health care facilities.

The Department then worked with the Knowledge Transfer Unit (KTU) of the University of Cape Town to update previous APC training content for the care and management of sexual assault victims presenting at primary health care facilities.

The updated content consist of the detailed step-by-step management of the person presenting to primary care post a sexual offence including emergency management and onward referral.

As required by section 66 of the Sexual Offences Act of 2007, the new training content was presented to the Standing Committee on Health in Parliament.

It is a great pleasure to launch this updated training module to capacitate health care workers on the management of sexual assault victims presenting at primary health care facilities.

It is my hope that all health care workers will use this module content to empower themselves with knowledge that will further strengthen their skills to serve the people of this county even better.

Thank you