

HEALTH ISSUES IN GOZO DISCUSSED

The Hon. John Dalli, Minister for Social Policy, accompanied by Parliamentary Secretary for Health, the Hon. Joe Cassar, visited the Ministry for Gozo, where they met with the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, in order to discuss issues related with public health services in Gozo. They also met with other officials from the Ministry for Gozo with whom they also discussed health related matters. The Gozo General Hospital Head delivered a presentation during which he highlighted health services offered at the hospital, as well as the particular challenges faced by the health services sector in Gozo.

Following the meeting, the Minister for Gozo accompanied the Minister for Social Policy and the Parliamentary Secretary for Health on a visit to the Gozo General Hospital.

The Ministers and Parliamentary Secretary were shown around various wards and departments within the hospital. They were also able to see works, which are currently being undertaken, in preparation for two projects to be co-financed through the European Structural Fund programme for Malta 2007-2013. These projects comprise the setting up of a new Radiology Unit and the restructuring of the second operating theatre at the Gozo General Hospital. They also visited the Hyperbaric Unit which was set up through co-financing from European funds as an initiative of the Ministry for Gozo to promote tourism, particularly the diving niche market. Medical officers who man this unit, explained how the decompression chamber is also being used for specific treatments needed by Gozitan patients, who previously had to attend for such treatments in hospitals in Malta.

Minister Dalli, Minister Debono and the Hon. Cassar also visited the two geriatric wards where they met some of the patients and other hospital staff.

The Hon. Giovanna Debono referred to the involvement of the Ministry for Gozo in the health services sector in Gozo and its endeavours to increase these services in order to reduce inconveniences for Gozitan patients. The Minister also said that works and other lined up projects will continue to ensure that old structures are replaced, thus continuously enhancing the quality and standards of healthcare services offered in Gozo.

On his part, the Hon. John Dalli stressed the importance of quality assurance within the health services sector. Minister Dalli also emphasised the need of more synergy between the Gozo General Hospital and Mater Dei Hospital so as to ensure uniformity of standards in the services offered.

The Hon. Joe Cassar, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, referred to the reform in primary health and how this will also affect health services on the island of Gozo.

The visit to Gozo ended on the site which will house the new Adult Training Centre, where finishing works are currently under way. Around forty persons with disability regularly use the services that are presently offered at the Adult Training Centre in Għajnsielem. Minister Giovanna Debono explained how the new centre will also result in the development of services offered within this sector in Gozo.

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