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voice of

Sister Jaconuum Cupido has worked her entire life for the State and has no intention of migrating to the private sector.

"I see a minimum of 60 patients a day, many days up to a 100."

"There are so many people (in the public sector) who need us. We are very short staffed and there are so many patients, the need is great," says Cupido, who has been a professional nurse in the Northern Cape for over 12 years.

Cupido is currently one of two professional nurses working at Springbok Clinic, a primary health care facility in the far north of the vast province.

During her hectic day, Cupido has to attend to, among others, the antenatal services for pregnant women, primary health care, chronic medication for conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, psychiatric patients, family planning and immunisation.

Patients usually start drying up around 3.30pm, giving Cupido and her colleague time to make appointments for referral patients, catch up on administration and have the lunch they missed.

"I usually stay for another hour or two," says Cupido, who does not receive any compensation for overtime.

"I don't expect it either," she adds.

"When I walk in at 7.15am, there is already a long queue of patients and we immediately start attending to them. By the official starting time of 7.30am, we've probably seen around five patients already."

a Nurse

Sister Jaconuum Cupido

of Springbok Clinic, Northern Cape

She admits that at the end of the day she is “absolutely drained and exhausted”.

Cupido describes her physical work environment as “neat and organised”. She is, however worried about some drugs that are often out of stock.

“For several weeks we did not have Disprin. We have also run out of medication for diabetics and that poses serious challenges,” she says.

The rural allowance has helped a lot, says Cupido, who used to work at Kimberley Hospital before moving to Springbok.

A first generation nurse, Cupido credits her mom with motivating her to study nursing.

“She wanted to be a nurse, but in those days they were not able to study. So, she always encouraged me.

“Despite the challenges I love my job. If I have my life over again, I would make the same career choices. No doubt about it.”

“It sometimes gets to me when I realise that the following day will simply be a repeat and the next group of patients will be waiting for me. Nothing can be postponed. You have to just keep going.”