

Gauteng Health Care Waste Policy Strategy and Action Plan

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Abstract

The Gauteng Health Care Waste Policy Strategy was developed after a need was identified for the development of norms, standards and relevant legislation for the safe handling, transportation treatment and final disposal of Health Care Risk Waste in South Africa during 1999. The extensive pilot project and research were funded by the Danish and was hosted by the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment after an array of Health Care Waste dumping were identified in the media as well as the introduction of the stringent National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act 39 of 2004). The Gauteng Health Care Sector incinerated their waste internally and due to the closure of their incineration plants alternatives treatments practices were sought. The need to develop these norms and standards were also due to limited knowledge base and industrial development.

The hosting of the above mentioned research and pilot projects left the Department of Health with numerous shortfalls and short, medium and long term strategic development planning was introduced. The established action plans which derived from the research were to be addressed by both the generators of Health Care Waste as well as the regulators.

Although the Department did receive funding for 5 year for the management of Health Care Waste in Gauteng, factors such as the Department of Finance and its influence on performance and contract management were one of many factors not understood and taken into consideration when the initial pilot project research was undertaken.

Although the project outcomes did include the short, medium and long term objectives, these objectives could only be addressed after the establishment of a Directorate responsible for the management of all relevant regulations, protocols and guidelines. This presentation will indicate the progress made in the Department as well as new developments.