



# REFURBISHMENT OF CHARLOTTE MAXEKE JOHANNESBURG ACADEMIC HOSPITAL (CMJAH)

## Impact Report

| BENEFICIARY  | AMOUNT ALLOCATED | AMOUNT DISBURSED |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| <i>South African Pandemic Intervention and Relief Effort (SPIRE)</i> | R78 316 117      | R78 316 117      |

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#### THE SOLIDARITY FUND'S HEALTH CARE MANDATE

The Solidarity Fund was established as a temporary rapid response mechanism, bringing together business, civil society, and government to augment and strengthen the South African government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund's Health Pillar is a key focus area of the response, assisting the country to address the vital areas that will have the most significant impact on reducing the devastating effects of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on an already overstretched South African health system. The Health Pillar therefore, works closely with the national and provincial health departments to help strengthen the health system's capacity to respond to the additional pressures brought by the pandemic.

In April 2021, a fire devastated critical sections of the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital (CMJAH). As the second largest hospital in Gauteng Province, this disaster limited access to essential health services, including for COVID-19, and placed an even higher burden on other hospitals in the province and beyond. The Fund quickly stepped in to assist.

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#### ENSURING CONTINUED ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital is a quaternary level central hospital and is one of the largest hospitals in Gauteng with 1 102 beds. It provides highly specialised treatment and care and thus has the most developed clinical services and highest concentration of specialists and specialist treatment in the province. The hospital has a 75-80% bed occupancy

rate with over 3 000 admissions per month. It plays a vital role in the healthcare delivery and referral network of the Gauteng health system, and is a specialised infectious disease management institution.

For these reasons, as the country was preparing itself for the pandemic to hit our shores, the hospital was one of the first few hospitals identified by the Minister of Health in 2020 to have the human resource and infrastructure capacity to manage COVID-19 cases. The hospital is recorded to have capacity to manage over 5 000 cases of COVID-19 in its emergency care units and wards during a peak of a wave of infections.

In April 2021, during the severe third wave of the pandemic, a fire in the parking lot resulted in the emergency evacuation of patients and the closure of the hospital. Five thousand five hundred (5 500) hospital staff and more than 5 000 COVID-19 patients had to be re-directed to 15 overflow hospitals in the province. The removal of CMJAH from the health system chain put exorbitant pressure on an already fragile Gauteng health system as it battled the most severe wave of the pandemic since March 2020.

Amid pressure from civil society and the South African Human Rights Commission, the Gauteng Premier and the CMJAH administration decided to reopen Block One of the hospital as an emergency humanitarian measure. This required the urgent refurbishment of Block One that hosts the acute emergency unit where COVID-19 cases are first seen. There was also the need to address the fire compliance status of the hospital to obtain a certificate of safety from the Occupational Health and Safety regulator and a certificate of occupation from the City of Johannesburg so that the hospital could start functioning again.

In light of this, the Solidarity Fund supported the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) with the refurbishment of Block One so that it was able to once again provide acute and emergency care to COVID-19 patients, in preparation for the then anticipated fourth wave to help ease the pressure on the other hospitals who were treating the re-directed patients.

The refurbishment of Block One was approached in two phases with a priority on the Acute and Emergency unit under phase one, so that it could be re-opened as soon as possible to start seeing patients. Phase two would then utilise the remainder of the grant to complete construction work to install equipment for a fire safety system. Installation of this system includes implementation of rational fire design, ventilation and medical gas compliance, and electrical and fire compliance of the South Tower of Block One, the infectious disease block.

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### IMPACT AT A GLANCE

The rehabilitation of Block One of the CMJAH enabled:



**Restoration** of the Accident and Emergency services in level 6 of Block One, the Infectious Diseases Block



**Improved ventilation** for better environmental safety for patients and staff



**Installation** of state-of-the-art fire safety equipment

## PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDED THE FUND'S SUPPORT

This project was closely aligned to the following principles:



### **Alignment with the Fund's rapid response mandate to COVID-19 and its impact:**

The Fund plays an additive role to the SA government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to the Charlotte crisis formed part of providing urgent support to refurbish parts of the hospital that affect immediate care to COVID-19 cases, and to help relieve the burden of cases that were spilling to other hospitals. The restoration of Block One was prioritised because of its alignment to the Solidarity Fund's COVID-19 mandate. The Fund agreed to assist the GDoH to catalyse the reopening of Charlotte while government was still making plans for the fire safety designs and refurbishment of the rest of the hospital which would only make the hospital reopen between 2023 and 2025.



**Impact additionality:** Through this project, the CMJAH was able to restore health services as quickly as possible and continue to provide much needed COVID-19 and other health care during the fifth wave. The upgrades to the hospital brought improvements to the facility that will last long into the future.



**Value for money and local partner support:** The Fund's implementing partner, SPIRE, has been involved in similar projects in the past, and at Charlotte, is engaging the same local professional team it has used for similar projects, enabling it to ensure quality and value for money. SPIRE is taking all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the Works are undertaken and completed in accordance with the specifications and within the timelines.

## REFURBISHMENT PROCESS

The Solidarity Fund entered into a grant agreement with the South African Pandemic Intervention and Relief Effort (SPIRE). Through this agreement, the Solidarity Fund provided R78 316 117 to assist with the refurbishment and installation of Fire Prevention Systems in Block One of the CMJAH.

The support to CMJAH was implemented in two phases. Phase one focused on the fire safety refurbishment of the CMJAH Block One, level 6 accident and emergency (A&E) ward. This was completed in March 2022 and opened in May 2022. Phase two will focus on fire safety refurbishment of the remainder of CMJAH Block One South Tower to ensure the full occupancy as determined by the City of Johannesburg. This phase is ongoing and is planned to be completed by March 2023.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

### **SPIRE**

SPIRE is part of the FNB Philanthropy Donor Choice Foundation Trust. SPIRE was contracted by the Fund to facilitate and manage the implementation of the project. It is responsible for undertaking of the Works and for appointing and managing the various professional teams and contractors in this regard.

### Gauteng Department of Health

The GDoH is the overall beneficiary of the project. The completed works will be donated to the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development and the GDoH, who are also responsible for supporting the regulatory and certification elements of the construction.

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### IMPACT

The Fund's rapid support helped to strengthen the Gauteng Health Department's immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic which was severely affected by the closure of CMJAH. In the more medium term, the restoration of Block One of the CMJAH and its COVID-19 facilities ensured the hospital was ready to respond to the anticipated fourth and fifth waves of the pandemic.

The project will also have a crucial long-term impact on the national health response:

- The architectural build and model used for Block One will be used as a standard of excellence for other Blocks within Charlotte.
- As one of the premier public health facilities in the province and the country, the CMJAH had also been assisted by the Fund to procure specialised, essential, and critical care equipment which would have lain fallow had the hospital not been re-opened. The Solidarity Fund's investment in the hospital therefore enabled the use of over R10million of this medical equipment to improve the lives of patients.
- With CMJAH being a super-specialist hospital, the reopening of Block One kick-started the phased re-opening of parts of the hospital and restored the critical role of the hospital in the health care service chain for COVID-19, cancer, and other serious medical conditions which continue to make patients more vulnerable to COVID-19 if not timeously and appropriately managed.

### The restoration of CMJAH Block One in pictures





**GRAND  
OPENING  
OF LEVEL  
6 A&E**

**09TH MAY  
2022**



**GRAND  
OPENING  
OF LEVEL  
6 A&E**

**09TH MAY  
2022**



**GRAND  
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## KEY CHALLENGES

Several unforeseen issues emerged during the implementation of the project. The absence of a project team at the CMJAH to oversee the project caused initial delays. The Solidarity Fund addressed this challenge by approving a project administrator to support the project.

Upon commencement of the project, it became evident there were other construction related issues that had not initially been anticipated. These included the need to upgrade additional support services like the ventilation equipment, steam, and medical gas facilities. The project plan was amended to address these.

Due to the multiple stakeholders involved in the project, communication with, and the management of the various stakeholders, including engaging the local community through a community liaison officer, required greater attention to avoid causing delays. Timeframes also had to be adjusted due to the additional upgrade requirements, and other issues such as theft of cables and other resources.

Learnings and mitigation measures from these challenges are being used to improve implementation of phase two of the project.

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## CONCLUSION

The CMJAH project has had an immediate impact on the province of Gauteng, enabling the province's health system to continue to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide essential and specialised health services.

As one of the largest specialist public health facilities in Gauteng and the country, the restoration of Block One and the improvement of fire and other safety standards and protocols, helped to ensure that one of the country's most valuable hospitals can continue to serve the provincial and national health system, providing vital primary and specialist health care, and training of future health professionals.

