

## Western Cape academic hospitals

**To the Editor:** As a former head of the Associated Academic Hospitals (Groote Schuur, Red Cross War Memorial and Tygerberg), I would like to support the view that these hospitals should continue to be managed as an integral part of the Western Cape Provincial Health Service.

In the simplest of terms, and from the point of view of our patients, let us not fix a system that works! The one guarantee that all our patients have, from the remotest area of the province to the city of Cape Town, is universal access to the best health facilities that the country can offer. None of this happened accidentally, but rather through decades of planning and implementation, starting with the 'Down and Out' plan in 1992, which continues today through the Provincial Plan for Healthcare 2020. This has resulted in a network of well-run health facilities: mobile clinics, community health centres, district and regional hospitals and, logically, tertiary hospitals. All these facilities, or more correctly their patients, are linked by a comprehensive province-wide emergency and non-emergency transport system.

While the partnership between the universities and the health department naturally has its ups and downs, on balance our patients have been and are the winners. This is what it's all about, and we dare not do less! This is service delivery to all our people, at its best, and should not be tampered with.

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