

## MEDIA STATEMENT

23 September 2021

EMBARGOED: IMMEDIATE

Eastern Cape Department of Health MEC Nomakhosazana Meth has learnt with shock the sudden passing of two month old Anothando Mtshobi.

Baby Anothando, who was born with suspected Progeria, a rare genetic condition, passed away at the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital ((NMAH) in Mthatha on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 in the afternoon.

Baby Anothando had been admitted at St Barnabas Hospital in Ntlaza, Libode before being transferred to NMAH.

The MEC, who acted swiftly when she heard about the condition of Anothando by dispatching healthcare workers to examine the baby, sent her condolences to the Mtshobi family.

The MEC visited the baby girl in hospital three weeks ago to offer support to the family and also donate essentials for the little baby girl.

"We are quite saddened by this untimely death of Anothando because we were hoping that she would soon be discharged from hospital".

"I am deeply saddened by the death of this young girl. The death of a child is unnatural, unfair and tragic. I would like to offer my sincere and deep condolences to the family. We feel the pain they are going through," Meth said.

Test results have not yet come back to confirm whether baby Anothando was born with Progeria.

The little girl passed away due to other medical problems that she was treated for at the hospital. Genetic studies for Progeria are still pending, however, other investigations done confirmed that the child had other underlying congenital infections that led to her complications.

Since having been admitted to hospital, the girl was managed by a multi-disciplinary team that involved doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and rehabilitative services through physiotherapists, occupational health therapists and dietitians.

The team worked tirelessly to ensure that Anothando received a chance in life even though statistics do indicate poor prognosis for such conditions. Academic centres around the province and Cape Town were constantly being updated on the progress and to access further expertise.

The MEC said she had hoped Anothando would grow up to live a healthy, normal and long life like other children.

The MEC further urged communities to embrace people born with disabilities and rare conditions.

"As communities, we have a responsibility to love and take care of those born with what others might say are unusual body features."

Issued by the Eastern Cape Department of Health.

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