

The Weekly

GOVERNMENT OFFERS BURSARY AND MEDICAL AID TO AILING YOUTH

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Given second chance ... Gabriel Manhica has thanked the provincial government for its generosity

Gabriel Manhica's life has been changed for the better after the provincial government offered to pay his medical bills and was granted a scholarship to study medicine in Cuba

A 19-year-old Gabriel Domingo Manhica, from Kroonstad, was elated after the Free State provincial government offered to pay his medical bills last week.

Manhica has been suffering from ascites, which is a rare medical condition characterised by excess fluid accumulating in the space between the tissues lining of the abdomen, and abdominal organs.

The condition, and the pertinent painful discomfort, has forced him to frequently go to the hospital for medical assessments, over the years.

"My condition got to a point where I get tired to sit, walk and I lose a lot of sleep because of the severe pains. It worries my family and my parents feel helpless although there is little they can do to help me," said Manhica.

He was hospitalised at the Boitumelo hospital in Kroonstad. He told The Weekly that he was diagnosed with tuberculosis when he was in Grade 11, in 2009, and his university studies have been affected.

He said his treatment took nine months instead of the required six months. He suspects this might have led to his current condition.

After experiencing complications, Manhica sought medical help from a local clinic and has been in and out of hospital since. He said he learnt that his condition may cause his liver to expand which may lead to further complications.

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His parents have incurred massive bills following his transfer to a Bloemfontein hospital, where he is undergoing medical observation, by experienced medical specialists.

His mother Elizabeth Manhica (49) said her son's medical condition has immensely burdened the family, in the midst of many other challenges.

"We want to see him get well and complete his studies. His health has affected us and it is not easy because he was not born this way but something that happened a few years back. It was far so we could not go see him. It pains as a parent. Life is also difficult because we do not work," she said.

Manhica was discovered by acting MEC for health, Mosebenzi Zwane, who was accompanying the Free State premier, Ace Magashule, during his visit to the hospital. Magashule consequently instructed Zwane to help the family.

As a result, the provincial government has offered immediate help to Manhica, upon learning about his plight. He was also offered a scholarship to go study medicine in Cuba.

Manhica said he was excited and feels privileged that the provincial government intervened and took interest in his wellbeing. He said this offered him the opportunity to get his health back and be able to do the things he once enjoyed doing.

"It is an honour and rare for an MEC to visit a person like me, take time to find out what is wrong with me and offer assistance."

Zwane said it was important that Manhica gets his health back and continue with his studies. He encouraged him not to lose faith because the doctors are confident that he will recover.

The Bonitas House Calls television presenter, Dr. Victor Ramathesele, also visited Manhica. He assumed that his situation could have been caused by a number of things but in this case a liver problem.

He said doctors at the hospital have done a brilliant and satisfactory job. Ramathesele also praised the provincial government for transferring Manhica to another hospital where he is being treated by specialists.

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