

Progress Update on Xolani Hlobo Dental Laboratory (An illegal operation in Grahamstown)

On the morning of 23 January 2018, accompanied by the Joza SAPS officers in Grahamstown and their official photographer, our Inspectorate visited the location of an illegal dental laboratory at 4356 and 43378, Ext 7, Joza Location.

Although not much evidence was collected at the 1st address but it became apparent that there was sufficient equipment and materials to suggest that work related to the functions of a dental technician was at some point being carried out from here.

It was at the second location when the full extent of the illegal operation was revealed. Boxes of unmounted artificial teeth were confiscated. Sheets of wax, instruments used in setting up teeth, burs, a hanging motor, plaster of paris and yellow stone powder, pumice and a polishing lathe, flasks and many other materials and equipment that gave one no doubt that a well-established dental laboratory



was being operated here. There was evidence of a client list whom dentures had already been made for that was confiscated as well, including an invoice which indicated that he was being supplied with all the materials that he needed and was couriered to him.

A container of anaesthetic was also found amongst the items that were confiscated. Now I ask

you, to what extent will many such illegal operators go just to make a buck through this profession? As far as endangering the life of a patient by not only making illegal dentures but also extracting teeth and administering the anaesthetic in the process? Now that is scary. The investigation also revealed that

Mr. Hlobo was not only operating in Grahamstown but he also had an operation in the Uitenhage area which was flourishing. How many other venues are still out there that we have not discovered yet?

A case has been opened against this person who has since appeared before the court. The matter was remanded for consultation and we are awaiting further feedback from the investigating officer. Many thanks must go to Mr. Swanepoel in Grahamstown who assisted the Council in supplying the information that helped in this investigation. He has since reported to Council that ever since this raid on Xolani, he has been getting a flood of patient work being referred to his laboratory.