

87^{of} 100**Dr. Viola Morolo**

Here to be Orchestrating

**From waiting lists
to operating rooms:
Dr. Morolo's mission
to transform access
to surgery.**

After seeing the consequences of delayed surgical care throughout her career, urologist Dr. Viola Morolo set out to prove what could happen when South Africa's healthcare sector worked together.

For a patient waiting for surgery, time is about far more than a date on a hospital calendar. Delayed access to care can affect their health, ability to work, family responsibilities and quality of life. It is a reality Dr. Morolo has witnessed throughout her career and one that convinced her that tackling surgical waiting lists would require a collective response.

That conviction led to the establishment of African Synergy Health (ASH), a not-for-profit organisation built around collaboration between healthcare professionals, hospitals, government stakeholders, suppliers, sponsors and communities. Its ambition is significant: zero patients on elective surgical waiting lists in South Africa, and ultimately across the African continent.

Rather than viewing the public and private healthcare sectors as separate parts of the system, Dr. Morolo's approach focuses on what becomes possible when expertise and resources are brought together around a common goal. Under her leadership, ASH has mobilised stakeholders across the healthcare ecosystem to develop practical interventions that can help patients access the procedures they need.

Among its flagship initiatives is the ASH Mandela Surgical Marathon, a multi-province healthcare campaign inspired by Mandela Day and its tradition of collective service. Through coordinated surgical marathons, healthcare professionals and partner institutions come together to address waiting lists and provide life-changing procedures.

To date, 570 patients have undergone operations during the ASH Mandela Surgical Marathons. Behind that number are hundreds of people able to return to their families and communities with renewed hope and dignity.

The initiative also demonstrates a broader point about healthcare delivery. South Africa has expertise across its healthcare system, but addressing complex challenges at scale requires institutions and individuals to find new ways of working together. Through public awareness, strategic partnerships and community participation, ASH is showing how collaboration can translate into practical healthcare outcomes.

For Dr. Morolo, the long-term goal extends beyond individual surgical marathons. Her focus is on contributing towards sustainable healthcare systems that combine clinical excellence with innovation, partnership and social impact, while developing solutions that can improve access to care over time.

Her guiding belief borrows from Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it's done." For the 570 patients who have already made it off a surgical waiting list and into an operating room through ASH's efforts, that belief has become something far more tangible.

**Your
story
matters**

