MEDIA RELEASE	**COVID-19 epicentre: PSA questions Gauteng Health's state of readiness**
DATE	27 March 2020
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned about the state of readiness in the Gauteng Department of Health to combat the Covid-19 pandemic owing to a serious shortage of protective gear and sanitiser material at Gauteng Heath Clinics.

At Ramokonopi Clinic a patient with all the symptoms of COVID-19 was tested and results are expected in 48 hours. The Clinic, however, does not have an isolation room and the patient was placed in one of the consultation rooms. Staff members were moving in and out of the room and then around the Clinic with minimum protective gear. The laboratory instructed that the Clinic must be sanitised but there is no material available for this. The patient was released and sent home to await the test results.

At the Alexander Clinic, no water was available for two days. This was only rectified on the morning of 27 March 2020 after the PSA and employees demanded that this issue be attended to urgently. The Clinic also has very little protective gear and Porters who move around patients have been using the same masks and gloves since Monday.

The COVID-19 Steering Committee of the Gauteng Department of Health collapsed after the Head of Department showed no commitment to deal with emerging issues. The agreed-upon document that employees should have as a working guideline has still not been signed by the Head of the Department. This is a clear indication of the HOD's lack of commitment and comprehension of the seriousness of the matter.

Gauteng Province has been hit hard and is regarded as the epicentre of Covid-19 in South Africa. The PSA calls on the Gauteng Premier to take charge of the process to avoid a potential catastrophe.

END