

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **COVID-19: PSA condemns decision by Department of Labour and Employment to stop inspections at Health facilities**

**DATE**                                      3 April 2020

**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                             communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked by the decision of the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) to stop its Inspectors from carrying out inspections at Health facilities.

The PSA approached the DEL to request the intervention of Labour Inspectors as that most Clinics in Limpopo do not comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*. These facilities do not have water, did not provide personal protective equipment, sanitisers, soap, gloves, and masks. Some also do not have toilet paper.

Section 8(1) of the *OHSA* determines that every employer must provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. This should always be maintained, especially amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic. Labour Inspectors are responsible for enforcement of section 8 of the *OHSA*.

The Department of Health failed to heed the PSA's call to close some of these clinics to ensure the safety of employees. The PSA, when it requested the DEL's intervention, was informed that a Directive had been issued wherein Labour Inspectors are barred from inspecting any Health facility until further notice and should focus on shops and farms. Ironically, it is the DEL that issued guidelines in dealing with COVID-19 at workplaces which the Clinics in Limpopo are not complying with, and with the DEL is now failing to inspect for compliance.

The PSA calls upon the Minister of Employment and Labour to withdraw the directive, which the PSA regards as unlawful and creates the perception that Health workers' safety is not of importance. Health workers are at the forefront of combating the pandemic and it is crucial that their work environment supports their health and safety.

The PSA will continue to monitor compliance with the *OHSA* in all government facilities and the DEL is tasked ensure that employers comply. Failure by the Minister to withdraw the Directive will be tantamount to a gross dereliction of duty that could have dire consequences for the country.

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