

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA condemns government's conduct**

DATE 3 August 2020

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 240 000 public sector employees, is appalled by numerous government institutions' flouting of COVID-19 Regulations by not taking precautions when employees contract the virus.

The Department of Correctional Services and provincial Departments of Health are especially guilty in this regard. Employees who have tested positive or have encountered employees who have tested positive are not requested to immediately self-isolate and continue performing duties because of capacity problems. Employees awaiting test results are also requested to continue performing their duties whilst their results are confirmed. This conduct not only puts the lives of employees at risk but pose grave danger to members of the public.

Regulations issued by the President are no longer adhered to by these Departments and strict requirements for decontamination and isolation to prevent the spread of the virus are disregarded. At the George Mukhari Hospital in Gauteng, for example, the PSA has been informed that there is no social distancing in the waiting area or the isolation rooms for suspected COVID-19 patients. The PSA has also established that to date there are two confirmed COVID-19 deaths of doctors linked to the hospital. The one doctor was working in the hospital's theatre and the other was moved to Jubilee Hospital shortly before passing on.

It is evident that despite the hospital complying with personal protective equipment requirements, the neglect of aspects of the regulations, has had a devastating effect and claimed the lives of two doctors. Government, as an employer, has become a risk to the country and is clearly failing to manage the pandemic. Services and normality will not be reached soon at the current infection rate.

The PSA is alarmed at this state of affairs and issues a stern warning that it remains government's responsibility to ensure that the workplace is a safe. The PSA demands that as a responsible employer, government should comply with the regulations and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The PSA will not hesitate to hold government responsible should the safety of workers be comprised.

END