

MEDIA RELEASE: Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital: PSA applauds confirmation of opening date

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EMBARGO: NONE

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the confirmation by the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health, Nomagugu Simelani-Zulu, that the long-awaited opening of the R2.8 billion Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital will take place at the end of March 2021.

The PSA, which represents the majority of employees in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, has been consistently calling for the opening of the Hospital with the aim to address the challenges facing vulnerable communities in kwaMashu, Nanda, Phoenix and surrounding areas. These residents are forced to use the overcrowded Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital with limited resources. In addition, the PSA's efforts are aimed at bringing clarity to workers who have applied for the advertised positions and have not received updates regarding their applications.

The PSA is therefore disappointed with a statement issued by the MEC. The statement is misleading as there are no regularly monthly meetings between labour and the Head of Department (HOD), nor scheduled quarterly meetings with the MEC to provide updates or serve as a platform for providing clarity. Instead, the PSA's attempts to get attention from both the offices of the MEC and the Premier to resolve matters were ignored. The PSA is aware that other unions are also looking for answers on when is the Department planning to open the Hospital, begging the question which unions the MEC is referring to in the statement when she suggests that monthly and quarterly meetings are convened. The fact is that the last meeting with the MEC was some eight months ago. The MEC's attitude indicates that she has been either misled or is deliberately intending to cover up for the KZN Health HOD and senior management.

The PSA urges officials in senior positions to be honest with the public and refrain from using rhetorical and political statements as there are no political intentions associated with calls to open the Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital. The only concerns are for the wellbeing of citizens and being accountable to the public and taxpayers. The PSA has no agenda other than the mandate of its members to demand the opening of the Hospital to ease pressure on surrounding health facilities, create job opportunities for unemployed workers and career enhancement for current health workers.

The PSA therefore regards the opening of the Hospital as a victory for the working class and communities that will benefit from the services at this advanced Hospital.

END