



MEDIA RELEASE **PSA appalled by Free State Department of Health's lack commitment to protect employees**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) continues to experience non-commitment from the Free State Department of Health to provide adequate health and safety protection to employees against COVID-19 infection.

In a recent incident at Pelonomi Academic Hospital, the PSA was shocked by the Department's indifference to issues raised by the Union in respect of the deep cleaning of the maternity ward. The PSA investigated claims made by management, that deep cleaning of the ward was done but discovered that most surfaces were still covered in dust. In a similar case, the Itemoheng Hospital failed to deep clean and disinfect affected areas after an employee tested positive for COVID-19. At Universitas Academic Hospital, management also failed to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and do deep cleaning. These matters only received attention after employees refused to work unless provided with appropriate PPE and that affected areas are deep cleaned.

In the wake of numerous complaints by the PSA regarding the lack of appropriate, quality PPE and compliance with COVID-19 protocols, it is becoming clear that the Free State Department of Health lacks commitment to provide protection to its employees and the public against COVID-19-related hazards. These employees are in desperate need of PPE and too many have already and unduly lost their lives in the line of duty. The Department's lack of commitment is compounded by a lack of psychological support for infected employees and those who return to work after the isolation period. Despite claims by the employer that such services are available, these services do not reach the PSA's members.

Apart from addressing these concerns with the Hospitals' managements, the PSA also reported the matters to the Provincial Steering Committee and the Department of Employment and Labour to conduct a compliance audit. The PSA calls on all employees to report any non-compliance to the Union to ensure that all institutions comply with applicable legislation.

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