

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	<b>PSA calls on Limpopo Provincial Health MEC to suspend 24-hour service at non-compliant clinics</b>
<b>DATE</b>	28 June 2023
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is disturbed that the Limpopo Department of Health has implemented a 24-hour service at various Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities, despite not complying with the policy on the provision of 24-hour service at such facilities.

The PSA has learnt that pressure from some communities resulted in restoration of 24-hour services at most clinics without due diligence. The policy provides for staffing requirements with a minimum of two professional nurses on duty per night. This includes midwives/accoucheurs, a minimum of one enrolled nurse or enrolled nursing assistant, and one cleaner, and a minimum of three security officers. The Department undertook to recruit and appoint employees in critical positions as per the policy but failed dismally, resulting in a high rate of vacancies. The Department was also supposed to ensure a functional electrical back-up supply for any facility that provides 24-hour service.

The PSA supports accessibility of services to communities, but this cannot be at the expense of employees. It is irresponsible to have one professional nurse working night shift. This is against the approved policy and places unnecessary strain on employees as it creates opportunities for errors that can result in litigation against the Department. The Department has failed to fill vacancies at most health institutions but still expects professional and excellent services. In addition, most clinics have dysfunctional air conditioners, exposing employees to extreme cold and resulting ailments.

The PSA calls on the MEC for Health to immediately suspend 24-hour services at clinics that do not meet policy requirements and address human resources and infrastructure issues to ensure compliance with departmental policies and nursing regulations. The PSA continues to engage the Department on this matter and will escalate the matter to Premier's Office should there not be compliance. The Department of Health cannot expect employees to work in dangerous, unconducive conditions whilst the Department prioritises service delivery above their health and safety.

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