PSA
The Union Of Choice

MEDIA RELEASE	**PSA calls upon Limpopo Premier to investigate awarding of aeromedical service tender**
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EMBARGO	None
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) questions the motive behind the Limpopo Department of Health awarding a large, three-year aeromedical service contract to Buthelezi EMS (BEMS)/FIM Aviation allegedly without the required inspection of its base, hangar, equipment and licensing by the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), which is also already under investigation by the Hawks, the SIU and National Treasury.

Although the company has not yet been found guilty of wrong doing, the fact that it is under investigation should be alarming to the Department of Health. Ignoring such information points at corruption and favouritism, especially noting that there was no pre-bid briefing as the Department indicated that this was not necessary. What is even more disturbing is the allegation that the company does not have the required certification to provide such service, which was confirmed by the SACAA. The SACAA indicated that it did not inspect and certify the company's aviation base in Limpopo and did not receive such a request. The company is only certified to provide aeromedical services from its base in Midrand in Gauteng, hence allegations that patients are left stranded. The Department is now forced to use private-sector service providers based in Gauteng, resulting in enormous cost owing to distance and time. It is said that the Department is paying some R42 000 per hour. This amounts to R210 000 for a five-hour round trip, which would have been far less if the helicopter was based in Polokwane.

The PSA, in line with the *Promotion of Access to Information Act*, will request the tender documents and specifications to certify that supply-management processes were followed, and due diligence was applied in awarding the tender.

This tender award follows another dubious award of a six-month contract to two doctors, without aeromedical experience, running a small-scale ambulance service in Makhado. This contract has cost the Department close on R3 million in four months.

The PSA calls on the Premier of Limpopo, Mr Stanley Mathabatha, to urgently investigate the awarding of this three-year contract that is costing the province dearly whilst the Department of Health is crying poverty in the face of constant medical shortages at clinics, unpaid service providers and vacancies owing to its financial crisis.
The Premier must ensure consequence management for this financial misconduct. The PSA will continue to oppose maladministration and corruption in the public sector at the expense of tax payers and service delivery.

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