

MEDIA RELEASE: PSA condemns portfolio committee on health for ignoring workers and failing KZN healthcare

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EMBARGO: None

ENQUIRIES: communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) in KwaZulu-Natal is outraged by the deliberate and shameful disregard shown by the National Assembly's Portfolio Committee on Health during their current visit to the province. Instead of addressing the systemic collapse of healthcare services, the Committee chose to ignore frontline workers and organised labour - the very people who experience these failures firsthand.

The PSA has consistently sounded the alarm on the dire state of healthcare in KwaZulu-Natal. Workers have picketed, exposed, and challenged the Department over the ongoing crisis of chronic shortages of doctors, nurses, and essential staff; the victimisation of workers at the hospitals of Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central, Prince Mshiyeni Memorial, Dr Pixley Ka-Isaka Seme Regional, Eshowe, and many others; and the complete failure of management to provide adequate resources. Hospitals remain without security, support staff, or critical medical equipment. At Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital, a vital CT scanner has been non-functional for months, yet government officials sit idly by while patient care deteriorates.

The PSA is disgusted by the Provincial Department of Health's reliance on acting officials who lack the authority and competence to make urgent decisions. Officials responsible for Clinical and Corporate Services are mere placeholders in a system where numerous hospitals - Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital, Victory Mxenge Hospital, Grey's Hospital, Madadeni Hospital, Benedictine Hospital, Vryheid Hospital, and many more—operate under acting CEOs. This leadership vacuum has resulted in total administrative failure, putting both workers and patients at risk.

The Portfolio Committee has failed in its duty by relying on misleading, one-sided reports that vilify healthcare workers instead of holding the Department accountable for its gross mismanagement. The PSA will not allow its members - who are already breaking their backs under impossible conditions - to be used as scapegoats for government failures. The Department's focus on the so-called "staff attitude problems" is a disgraceful distraction from the real crisis: a healthcare system that is crumbling due to understaffing, medication shortages, and failed leadership.

The KZN Health Portfolio Committee is complicit in this failure. The baseless claims that PSA members are responsible for medication shortages are nothing more than blatant lies. The PSA's members have consistently placed orders for essential medicine, but deliveries have either been delayed or never made at all. Instead of pointing fingers at overworked and underpaid workers, The Committee should be demanding answers from the Department as to why medications are not reaching hospitals and clinics. The silence on the chronic shortages of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, clerks, and security personnel exposes his hypocrisy and detachment from reality. The members of the union are not blamed, but the broken healthcare system is. Employees are forced to work in toxic environments where long queues and service delays are the direct result of staff shortages and resource

mismanagement. If the Portfolio Committee was serious about fixing the crisis, they would engage the PSA and healthcare workers directly, rather than launching baseless attacks to deflect from government incompetence. Furthermore, rural and urban clinics across KwaZulu-Natal remain without vital medication, yet the Human Rights Commission continues to sleep on duty, failing to intervene despite multiple calls from the PSA to investigate. These so-called oversight bodies are more interested in protecting the Department than ensuring the public has access to quality healthcare.

The PSA will no longer tolerate this blatant disregard for workers' rights and public healthcare. If the government refuses to act, the PSA will escalate its fight to expose government's failures, mobilise workers, and take decisive action against those who undermine healthcare delivery. The PSA demands an urgent meeting with the Portfolio Committee to present the real picture of what is happening on the ground. The time for empty rhetoric is over - members of the union and the citizens of KwaZulu-Natal deserve real solutions, not excuses.

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