

MEDIA RELEASE: PSA condemns remarks by Free State Health MEC

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns alleged utterances made by the MEC of Health in the Free State, during a recent “Zoom Meeting”, where the MEC allegedly called on officials who have tested positive for COVID-19 and refuse to be quarantined, to be arrested. This incident allegedly happened during a meeting with senior officials of the department and union representatives.

It was reported during this meeting, that 4 Human Resource officials, 3 Doctors and 2 Nurses at Manapo Hospital, tested positive for COVID-19. Out of these 9 positive cases, 2 officials are said to be refusing to be quarantined. The PSA finds this to be highly unlikely but is even more disturbed by the MEC’s attitude, to resort to getting employees arrested instead of giving the necessary support and guidance to the health of employees, especially those who tested positive. The department could not provide any confirmation whether the infected officials were isolated and properly managed, which should include the provision of psychological support by the department. The MEC could also not provide a detailed report on the situation in the Qwa-Qwa region and Manapo Hospital, instead calling for support from unions to assist her in the current situation. The unions find this request very strange, because we have been very supportive, and actively involved in all COVID-19 structures established to deal with the implementation and evaluation of relevant actions and procedures to combat the spread of the virus. The unions have also been warning the department about the risk of not ensuring full compliance in terms of relevant regulation and legislation by highlighting the areas that needed urgent attention and sadly the response from the department has been quite disappointing.

This just shows that MEC has no idea of what has been happening within the Free State Department of Health especially the challenges that are faced by our members since the beginning of the lockdown.

The PSA would like to continue advising its members to avoid any contact with members of the public in cases where they are not provided with masks, sanitisers, and scanners. Public servants are further requested to report workplaces that are not complying with the health safety requirements, including the monitoring of temperatures at entry points.

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