

FOR PSA MEMBERS: EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

27-04-2020

Update: Virtual meeting between Eastern Cape Government and labour - 26 April 2020

The PSA was part of the virtual meeting between the Eastern Cape Government, led by Premier Oscar Mabuyane, including the MEC and HOD of Health together with labour. The meeting was arranged against the backdrop of the negative and unsubstantiated comments and wildcat demonstrations in some of health facilities owing to anxiety and fear amongst frontline workers in the battle against COVID-19.

The MEC and HOD made presentations during the meeting, covering two reports that included the identification and targeting of hot-spot areas, the strategy for patient transportation and forensic pathology, including the PPE forecast for the province. In their report, they confirmed that there were supply challenges in the last week of March 2020 in relation to PPE owing to the global demand for these items. The market is now normalised in terms of competitiveness and this problem is resolved. If there are any challenges encountered these must be brought to their attention for speedy response, including categories that are not supplied with correct PPE.

The PSA raised concerns that employees are not properly trained to deal with COVID-19. The employer conceded that only 4 000 employees were trained, which was insufficient taking into consideration mass testing and newly appointed Community Health Care Workers who also need training to carry out their mandate of mass screening and testing. Some of the issues that were raised were challenges with ventilators, and provision of the transport for health workers during the lockdown where the employer promised to investigate. With transport there are challenges in terms of the numbers involved.

The employer informed the PSA that it is filling critical positions on a six-months basis to a year contract to ensure staff availability. It confirmed that owing to a lack of capacity, proper screening/testing of the public did not take place as expected, which was corrected following a visit by the Minister of Health and recently with the appointment of CHCWs.

The commitments by the employer will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Members are requested to avoid participating in unprotected actions and to rather communicate their complaints to the PSA for assistance.

GENERAL MANAGER