

# INFORMUS



FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - FREE STATE

20-04-2020

## Update: COVID-19

The lack of communication and slow pace of addressing COVID-19 incidences by the Department of Health in the Free State have left the PSA no option but to do a physical visit at Pelonomi Hospital. The visit followed in the wake of serious concerns raised by members, especially related to compliance with COVID-19 requirements. Most of the concerns came from the Intensive Care and Isolation Units with complaints about personal protective equipment (PPE) not being provided to staff.

At the Isolation Unit where confirmed COVID-19 patients are treated, the PSA was welcomed by three Matrons in charge and staff members, including Cleaners, Professional Nurses and Staff Nurses. The PSA establish that Cleaning staff were wearing PPE (i.e. face shield, overgown, apron, gloves, masks and shoe covers). The PSA, however, addressed the standard operating procedures (SPOs) that were not in place, resulting in employees receiving different instructions from different Matrons, creating confusion on the PPE to be used in the Unit. The Matrons assured the PSA that the SOPs would be put in place immediately.

As far as the confusion caused by the withdrawal of usage of white suit overalls in the Isolation Area where suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases are being treated is concerned, the Matron indicated that the suits are used in cases where there is potential risk of blood spreading to the assisting Nurse from a patient. At the moment there are no cases of such risk.

At the time of the PSA's visit, the Isolation Unit had eight COVID-19 patients and four of those have completed their 14 days and were due to be released. Six additional Nurses were appointed in the Unit and commenced duties. More recruitment is expected to be completed shortly.

GENERAL MANAGER