



**FOR PSA MEMBERS: PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SECTORAL
BARGAINING CHAMBER (PHSDSBC) KWAZULU-NATAL (KZN)**

09-10-2025

Feedback: KwaZulu-Natal Special Provincial Chamber Meeting - 3 October 2025 at Wentworth Hospital Management Boardroom

The employer (KZN Department of Health) requested a special meeting where the employer presented to the Chamber that it has been experiencing shortages of operational ambulances in recent years. It currently has 448 ambulances, 118 are operational, 330 are in repairs. In response to this crisis, it has a short-term solution to outsource some EMS services to a panel of EMS licensed service providers in KZN.

To address and mitigate the persistent shortage of operational ambulances, supplement ambulance availability during operational period, and reduce turnaround time on inter-facility transfers (IFT) for inter-district and intra-district level, patients would be stabilised and then referred to clinicians, limiting delays in transfers.

Improved response times for IFT emergency transfers from a lower level to a higher level of care. The Department ambulances will be free to respond to community and accident evacuations as its resources will remain in the respective districts. Agreements with other registered private EMS exist in other provinces where there is a need to provide *ad-hoc* services when public-sector EMS resources have been exhausted and for IFTs that are urgent or in provinces that do not have advanced life support.

The employer further presented that these service providers will provide the Intermediate Life Support (ILS) Response Unit services only. Outsourcing to a panel of EMS licensed private road service operators with 300 ambulances that are distributed throughout the province to alleviate the problem of a shortage of operational ambulances on a short-term basis (six months) until May 2026.

The outsourcing for Inter-District will be confined to Priority One interfacility transfers requiring intermediate or advance life support. The Departmental EMS fleets will focus on emergency evacuations of patients in the community or accident site. All approval of cases will be managed and coordinated at a provincial level, every case to be authorised by a designated manager, prior to dispatching any private ambulance services.

A diligent Supply Chain Management (SCM) process is being undertaken to determine the rates, qualifying criteria, and the frequency of calling out service providers to ensure a fair process. This project is anticipated to be implemented by December 2025 as soon as SCM processes have been finalised by the employer. A ring-fenced budget has been allocated and will be utilised.

The employer assured the Chamber that employment conditions of employees will not be affected, and no employees will be redundant. The PSA noted the presentation by the employer and requested time to consult with members and report back to the Chamber in the next Chamber meeting in December 2025.

Members are encouraged to bring any labour-related matters to the attention of PSA shop stewards or contact the PSA Pietermaritzburg Provincial Office on 033 392 7600 or the PSA Labour Relations Officer, Mbongeni Mbanjwa, on 082 880 8966/ mbongeni.mbanjwa@psa.co.za.

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GENERAL MANAGER