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TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 18 JUNE 2007
EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA UPDATE: PUBLIC SERVICE STRIKE IMPACT ON HEALTH SERVICE

The Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal applauds the essential services staff for returning in numbers to their respective work stations on the weekend and today.

This shows the staff has heeded the call by the department for people to return to work so that we will be able to give service to patients at our health care facility. About 95% of our staff are back at work. This shows the character of our staff who live by our motto: **Fighting Diseases! Fighting Poverty! Giving Hope!** to our clients.

All health care facilities in KwaZulu-Natal are operational and we encourage people to use them as they are there to render quality service to the community.

We are adamant that soon we will have full staff compliment in our clinics and hospitals.

Again, we would like to commend the members of the SAPS for their sterling effort to protect our institutions throughout the strike.

The department wishes to remind relatives of people who have their family members in our institution that there is a hotline number that people can use to make enquiries about to their relatives in our hospitals.

Anyone who wishes to know how a patient is doing at any hospital in KZN can call the Operation Centre on a toll free number: **0800 005 133**. The Operation Centre will call the hospital and make enquiries about the patient and call the relative back home with information. This facility will save relatives from trouble of going through the protesters' intimidation at the gates of the hospitals.

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