

---

**Reference :** Northdale Hospital  
**Enquiries :** Sibonelo Msomi  
**Telephone :** (033) 395 2551  
06 March 2007

**Subject: RESPONSE TO THE WITNESS QUESTIONNAIRE**

The Department of Health is working with the South African Police Services in an investigation into allegations that a patient was raped at Northdale Hospital on Sunday.

The department's investigation is still at embryonic stage and it runs parallel with the SAPS's criminal investigation. It will be early days to point fingers but the department will not hesitate to act accordingly if it finds that there was negligence involved.

The department would appeal to interested parties to on the alleged incident to await the completion of the investigation so that they would know what could have happened. So far, the hospital has reported that the matter was promptly reported to the SAPS on Sunday afternoon when a Ward C patient reported that he had been sexually assaulted by another patient while at the toilet. Both the complainant and the suspects had been admitted in the same ward (for male patients).

The report says a full-scale manhunt by the Northdale Security Guards proved fruitless, as the suspect had disappeared into thin air after the alleged incident. It is not clear as yet how the suspect escaped from the hospital.

It is reported that police were informed of the alleged incident at about 14:00. The Mountain Rise police officials arrived at the institution at 16:15, and interviewed the victim. It was also reported to the police that the perpetrator had absconded.

According to the Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002, all mental ill patients need to be admitted to a District hospital for a 72-hour observation, prior to transfer to a psychiatric institution.

Six of the 11 staff members who were on duty at the ward were on lunch between 12:00 and 13:00 and the balance were on duty around which time the alleged rape could have occurred. Two staff members were serving lunch, while two were feeding patients that are not able to feed themselves. And one nurse was performing ward duties.

The victim has been examined by a medical officer and is receiving psycho-social support. The District Surgeon conducted forensic examination, and post prophylaxis has commenced. The victim is still at the hospital and the investigation into the matter is underway.

**Issued by: Mr. Leon Mbangwa**  
**General Manager: Corporate Communication**  
**KZN Department of Health Spokesperson**  
**083 459 8695**

- 
- KINDLY RETURN ALL DOCUMENTATION WHEN REPLYING