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**TO: ALL MEDIA**  
**DATE: 01 JULY 2009, 15H00**  
**EMBARGO: NONE**

**THE HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN KWAZULU-NATAL ARE RETURNING TO NORMAL**

Following calls and a court order forcing striking health workers to return to work, a majority of those who previously participated in a strike are back at work.

The Department has conducted a situational analysis and found that;

- (i) Most of the **eThekweni** Hospitals, previously reported to be largely affected by the strike, are returning back to normality. At King Edward VIII, RK Khan, Wentworth, King George V, Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central, Addington, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial and Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospitals the current attendance is between 60 and 85%, between today and yesterday. In the rest of the District the attendance is 100% and all services are being offered. There were 203 health care workers issued with dismissal letters in this district.
- (ii) In **Umgungundlovu** District the attendance is around 80 – 100% with Greys and Edendale Hospitals showing a 75 and 80% attendance (respectively). In the rest of the District all services are operational with 100% attendance. 5 Health care workers were issued with dismissal letters.
- (iii) In the **rest of the Districts** all services are operational. The remainder of those issued with dismissal letters is from Zululand (11), Ugu (20), Umzinyathi (2), and Sisonke (3). This makes the total number of health care workers issued with dismissal letters to be **244**.

Many people have taken leave hence the relative shortages in many instances; others are on courses to uplift their skills. The department wishes to call on those who have legitimate claims to prove that they have been working and were erroneously put on the absent lists and thus received letters of dismissal to come forward.

The Department further thanks the tireless effort put in by the nursing personnel and many medical officers who were assisted by the South African National Defence Force – Health Services to keep the health services available to those in need of care.

*“I would like to dispel the notion that is peddled by certain in the media which suggest that we are targeting medical officers and interns in particular. It is also said that we are “chasing away South Africans in favour of foreign doctors”. There is no such, we acted against an group of health care workers who have defied our calls as well as the Labour court order.*

*“While doctors may have a reason/s to disrespect the government of President Zuma, we feel they still need to have respect and care for our patients. Some of us qualified as doctors during apartheid. We differed with government’s point of view but we never went on strike, remained and looked after our patients.*

*“To our patients and society, we shall do everything in our power to accelerate the process of normalization of the situation and we shall ask for your patience, support and understanding”* says the MEC for Health, **Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo**.

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**ENDS**

ISSUED BY:

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