
TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 10 MARCH 2009
EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: MEDIA STATEMENT ON HOSPITALISATION OF MR SHABIR SHAIK AT INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI CENTRAL

The hospitalisation of Mr. Shabir Shaik at Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital (IALCH) has remained an issue of ongoing speculation and debates. We would like to place on record that the Department of Health has provided services to Mr. Shabir Shaik at the request of the Department of Correctional Services' Westville Prison, in line with our core function, that of providing equitable access to health care.

CASE MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT

Mr. Shaik was seen at the Cardiac Clinic (Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital) as a New Patient referred by Department of Correctional Services, Westville Prison Hospital on the 16th April 2007.

From the report at our disposal, the following can be deduce:

- 1 That Mr. Shaik had been diagnosed with systematic hypertension as far back as 2001 at the age of 44 years,
- 2 While he was first in prison, he had been a patient within the Westville Prison Hospital and then latter transferred to St Augustine, a private hospital in Durban,
- 3 Records indicate he has been in and out of hospital for the same condition and that treatment had been administered to him without any improvement,
- 4 Doctors treating him had not been satisfied with his improvement over the period of time,
- 5 Concluded in their letter to Department of Correctional Services in May to consider medical parole after conceiving that the conditions within the prison hospital were suboptimal to the kind of care required.
- 6 That Mr. Shaik remains at risk for a stroke, heart attack and blindness.
- 7 The discharge spoken of in November was based on the fact that after every effort put to bear, Mr. Shaik's pressure remains refractory to medication.
- 8 He has lengthy stay under specialist care, without effect.

Firstly, let me clarify Prof. DP Naidoo's explanation with regard to the discharge of Mr. Shaik. As a level four (4) hospital, IALCH provides acute care and only accepts referral cases. All patients that are referred to IALCH are normally down referred or "discharged" back to the referring hospitals, hence, the "discharge." In this instance therefore, the attending doctors have explained that they had advised the Department of Correctional Services to consider the down referral of Mr. Shaik, not on the basis that he was fit or well but for the Department of Correctional Services to apply its mind based on the report.

We hold the sacred view that part of the business of health is observing the Patients' Rights Charter. The management of Mr. Shaik as, any other patient is regulated by the Charter wherein it puts the right to Confidentiality and Privacy as well as Access to health as a fundamental right.

Due to the nature of his illness, we therefore, will not disclose his condition, except through his consent. For this reason, we apologize that we are not attaching any of the patient records, which would give a clearer picture of Mr. Shaik's condition.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Department of Correctional Services to make a decision on what to do with the medical report submitted to it by the attendant doctors.

Issued by Leon Mbangwa

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