

TO: ALL MEDIA  
DATE: 22 JUNE 2009, 15H00  
EMBARGO: NONE

**The Situation in KwaZulu-Natal is calm and most hospitals are operational**

The situation in most KwaZulu Natal hospitals is calm and hospitals are going on with the business of providing medical care to the ill.

The Department received reports from all the districts in the province which suggests that most health workers have heeded a call by the MEC to remain at work and allow the negotiation process to be amicably concluded. The most affected district by the "strike" is eThekweni where six major hospitals have reported that student medical doctors, those doing internship and a few junior doctors did not report for duty. In Pietermaritzburg, only Greys Hospital reported that there were doctors picketing near the hospital.

In uThukela, at Ladysmith hospital only five doctors were absent and this did not have an adverse effect to the operation of the hospital. In Zululand, 18 doctors from Vryheid Hospital did not report to work. In Ilembe, at Stanger Hospital doctors were picketing outside the hospital. In other districts, all hospitals are going on with their business.

The situation in Durban is such that skeleton staff is keeping the service going. We have not received reports that suggest that dentists, pharmacists and emergency medical practitioners are on strike as earlier suggested. There have also been false reports of patients being turned away at King Edward Hospital which is not true, the hospital is operational.

The department wishes to reiterate the Minister of Health (RSA), Dr Aaron Mokoalele Mofokeng's, call when he was responding to the South African Medical Association (SAMA) memorandum of demands where he said; "The Office of the Minister is totally committed to carrying out its political and administrative mandate. This is our guarantee that the resources of the department will be used to ensure that all the people of South Africa have a better life. My office is committed to building a partnership with all stakeholders, workers and professionals in the sector and beyond, including promoting good cooperation with medical doctors and specialists in the private and public sectors."

We appeal to people who need medical care to go to their clinics and those who have appointments to see a doctor or collect medicines must do so without fear of being turned away. The department will ensure that the health care services do not grind to a halt.

For more information contact Chris Maxon at 0832850567.

ENDS

ISSUED BY:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL