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**TO: ALL MEDIA**  
**DATE: 12 APRIL 2010**  
**EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **KZN MEC TAKES ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST ABUSE OF PATIENTS**

The Department is seriously concerned with the growing number of cases where people's rights are infringed and, in particular, women are becoming prey to sexual predators in the Department of Health.

Last week a trainee nurse, from the Midlands Nursing School, was reported to have demanded inappropriate sexual favours from two patients who had gone to Northdale Hospital for treatment. The trainee nurse is supposed to have 'fondled' the breasts of one patient and 'demanded oral sex from another'.

*"The sick men, women, and children in our care may well be the most vulnerable persons in society. Deeply misunderstood and stigmatized by many of their fellow citizens, they easily fall prey to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse and to gross and systematic violations of their basic human rights. We need to fight stigma and discrimination. Media have an important role to play in promoting human right ethos, positive attitudes and asserting that sick persons must be accorded the same rights as anyone else. As part of our endeavour to improve the quality of health care we will need to champion the human rights ethos and remove predators from our institutions"* says the **MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo**.

On hearing of these allegations, the trainee nurse was immediately removed from the hospital and a case of sexual assault has been opened with the Mountain Rise Police Station.

Ends  
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