

A Message from MEC Dhlomo to the Mazibuko family - ERMS staff member who was stabbed to death while responding to a call

TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 19 MAY 2011
EMBARGO: NONE

The MEC for Health in KwaZulu-Natal wishes to convey his, and the Department of Health's, condolences to the family of the late Mr. Michael Mazibuko (44 years) whom he described his contribution as; "He restored our faith in faith itself".

Mr. Mazibuko was called to assist his crew mates at an incident in Rosedale (Escourt) where a perpetrator had stabbed his own parents. On arrival at the scene and whilst assessing one of the patients' he was attacked and stabbed several times and died instantly. He's survived by a wife, children (5) and a 70 year old mother.

Michael (as he was famously known) was one of those rare generous and kind people who truly lived by the code of service. "We are told; he could discern and evaluate situations and people with a quick precision that was rarely inaccurate," says the MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo.

"There really is such a thing as 'beyond the call of duty'. It is not a myth. It is a reality. I know because he lived it. This is a testament to the kind of man and father he was for his immediate family and to everyone who knew him."

To the family the MEC says; "We say goodbye to the young child. The Department will long remember your son Michael as a hero who left a weighty legacy; a champion for those who had none; the soul the helpless; and the lion of the Province."

About a month ago another staff member (43 years old, Mr. Thulani Mkhize) of the Department's Emergency Medical and Rescue Services (EMRS) was shot at while transporting a patient. He lost his struggle for life on the operating theater. Again in Pietermaritzburg; EMRS personnel were called to assist and on arrival at the site they were held at gun point and had their cell phones were stolen.

The MEC said that the department is deeply concerned with the increasing incidents where paramedics fall victim to futile attacks. He said the paramedics are an interface between the patient and a hospital. "This may mean," he said, "their work determines whether a person lives or dies. Or whether one will have permanent disability or emergency medical care thus saving lives."

The MEC is calling on communities, especially leaders at community levels, to root out the criminal elements who attack and kill emergency personnel including those who hijack the state vehicles. MEC Dhlomo says emergency personnel are a "social capital" that must be protected for the social benefit of all; especially the sick and frail.

ENDS

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL
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