

# Media Update on preparations for injured patients from Nigeria

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Hospitals and emergency personnel in the province have been alerted to stand by to receive injured patients from the Nigerian building collapse, says KZN Health Head of Department, Dr Sibongile Zungu.

This comes as patients touched down on a rescue flight from Nigeria earlier today, organised by the South African government. Patients are being transferred to the Steve Biko Hospital in Pretoria where they will be medically assessed before any decisions are taken for their transfers to other provinces. "Once this is finalised and preparations made for any patients to be transferred to our province, we will then ensure they are received at the airport and transferred with our waiting ambulances to the appropriate hospitals. We want to assure families that their loved ones will receive the appropriate care and that as a nation we stand united with them in their grief and time of need. As a Department, our heartfelt condolences go out to those families who have lost their loved ones in this disaster and may their souls rest in peace," added Dr Zungu.

Dr Zungu has moved quickly to assure patients and families that the Department's emergency ambulances are fitted with life saving equipment and resources to deal with the transfer of patients to nearby hospitals on their arrival to the province. "Our emergency crew have all been briefed on the situation and our personnel are trained and ready to provide health care assistance to the injured as well as counselling if needed to families of those affected by this tragedy," said Dr Zungu.

Media are kindly requested to respect the privacy of the patients on arrival as well as the emotional state of families who are at their side. "Whilst this is a developing story of major significance for media, can I please also, at the same time, request that it be handled with sensitivity to the emotional and physical state of those affected. The media plays an important role in communicating the events as they unfold but this should not be done in hindrance to any health care service that needs to be carried out or without permission from those affected," added Dr Zungu.

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