

MEDIA RELEASE
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KZN Health MEC sends deepest condolences to the family of a doctor who died with XDR TB, hails her as a martyr

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has sent his deepest condolences to the family of Dr Nerissa Pather, who died after contracting the multi-drug resistant (MDR) Tuberculosis in 2002.

Dr Pather passed away on Thursday, 18 December 2014, and was buried in Durban today.

Her death came a day before the Department held an event at Addington Hospital, where it paid tribute to all healthcare workers who not only worked hard, but risked their own lives everyday while helping those who are infected with TB.

Dr Dhlomo attended Dr Pather's funeral, which was held at a church in Umhlanga. In a statement issued today, Dr Dhlomo hailed Dr Pather as a heroine and martyr.

"We are deeply touched and saddened by Dr Pather's passing. She has paid the highest price any health professional can pay for our country and its patients. As a medical doctor myself, Dr Pather's situation has made me realise how lucky I have been. I have seen so many patients with TB and I could have contracted drug-resistant TB. We will remember Dr Pather as a committed and selfless individual. Even when she contracted XDR while in the line of duty, she was not resentful. Instead, she showed remarkable courage and determination to live. Those are great attributes that we can all learn from. We wish her family strength and fortitude during this difficult time."

Ends

Issued by the office of the KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC

For interviews with the KZN Health MEC on this matter, contact Agiza Hlongwane on 083 706 8403 or 083 731 5647.