

MEDIA STATEMENT:

14 July 2015

Suspension of two doctors and a nurse following the death of Verulam accident victim

KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, is appalled by the manner in which a very critically injured Motor Vehicle Accident victim was dealt with at both Osindisweni and Mahatma Gandhi Hospitals over the past weekend.

The MEC has ordered an immediate investigation to establish the facts while the designated bodies governing the practice and performance of both doctors and nurses were still being informed.

Finding and immediate action:

Two [2] Doctors from both Osindisweni Hospital and Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospitals and a Nurse from Osindisweni Hospital have been suspended from duty with immediate effect.

This, while an extensive investigation into the death of a 19 year-old road accident victim who was allegedly refused treatment in both these institution is still pending.

A district family physician has been appointed to lead investigation and will report his findings in 48 hours. The Health Professions Council of South Africa and the Nurses Council will also be involved in this matter.

In terms of a preliminary investigation by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, it is alleged that:

The Osindisweni Doctor was supposed to:

- Assess the patient and resuscitate him.
- As the patient was in a critical condition, she was also supposed to call for a senior doctor, who is a Medical manager, and was within the premises.
- After stabilising the patient, she was then they supposed to have called the doctor in a referral/regional hospital, i.e. Mahatma Gandhi or Addington Hospitals.
- She would also have been expected to write a referral letter, detailing her assessment and management of the patient.

Conclusion:

She did not do anything that was expected of her.

Osindisweni Nurse:

This Professional nurse did not:

- Open an admission file for the patient
- Did not perform nor record any baseline assessment (vital signs) of the patient.
- Did not call for the Senior Operational Nurse Manager in charge of the Out Patient Department

The Mahatma Gandhi Hospital Doctor:

- On arrival at Mahatma Gandhi, the patient should have been prioritised for an emergency resuscitation.

- The report at the disposal of the department is that the doctor was informed that here is a patient in a critical condition that requires immediate attention and resuscitation.
- The doctor refused to treat the patient told the paramedics that they must either take the patient back to Osindisweni or proceed to Addington.
- The patient died at casualty while still being on the stretcher without having been given necessary attention.

Dr Dhlomo also emphasised the fact that it's a rule that patients should be transported to the nearest health facility, regardless of whether it is private or public health institution. He pondered over whether it would not have been feasible for this patient to be taken to a nearby private hospital.

Dr Dhlomo, meanwhile, expressed his deepest condolences to the family of the deceased.

ENDS

Issued by the Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC