

21 July 2015

Media statement on the suspension of Mkhuze clinic nurse who allegedly turned pregnant patient away

An advanced midwifery nurse from Mkhuze Clinic has been suspended with immediate effect, following allegations that she failed to provide an acceptable level of care to an expectant mother yesterday.

It is alleged that the patient arrived at the clinic in a private vehicle already in labour yesterday morning. But the nurse, whose name is withheld, allegedly refused to admit her, stating that she should be taken to Hospital for delivery as she was deemed “high risk”.

The patient had previously been advised to come to the nearby Bethesda Hospital so that she could be referred to Lower Umfolozi Clinic today (21 July 2015) to deliver the baby. However, she went into labour on Sunday - two days earlier than expected, and arrived at Mkhuze clinic yesterday morning.

On leaving the clinic premises after being turned away from the clinic, the expectant mother requested to use the bathroom. At this point, the driver could see that she was at an advanced stage of labour and went back to try and convince the nurse that the patient really needed to be admitted - in vain. She allegedly refused to examine the patient.

The mother eventually delivered the baby on the clinic premises.

A Medical Manager and Nurse Manager from Bethesda Hospital arrived and found that the baby and his mother were in a good condition.

Mother and baby were taken to hospital for further management.

Meanwhile, the nurse has been suspended with immediate effect, and the Department has instituted disciplinary proceedings against her.

The suspension of the Mkhuze Clinic nurse follows the suspension last week of two doctors – one from Osindisweni Hospital and another from Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital - and a Nurse from Osindisweni Hospital. This was following the death of a 19 year-old road accident victim who was allegedly refused treatment in both these institutions.

Commenting on the suspension, newly-appointed Head of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, Dr Sifiso Mtshali said: “The Department has no place for healthcare professionals who fail to uphold the rights of healthcare users. We will not hesitate to take stringent action against them.”

Dr Mtshali said that even if a healthcare institution is not at a level where it can admit a patient during an emergency, the minimum should be that the patient must be stabilized before being referred to the relevant institution.

“The Department is serious about compliance with patient care protocols and the upholding of Batho Pele (People First) principles,” Dr Mtshali said.

ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health