

MEDIA RELEASE
17 May 2016

KZN Department of Health condemns disruption of operations at three KZN health facilities

THE KWAZULU-Natal Department of Health has noted with concern the disruption of operations in separate incidents that compromised health service delivery today. The Department noted incidents at Montebello, Prince Mshiyeni and EG & Usher hospitals in separate incidents which compromised health service delivery.

It is alleged that last night (16 May 2016), a crowd of about 100 people barricaded the road and locked the main gate at Montebello Hospital in Ndwedwe, north of Durban, rendering the hospital inaccessible.

The situation has remained tense since then, and the hospital was unable to admit or discharge patients.

It is alleged that the local community is unhappy about the processes followed in the appointment of a general orderly at the hospital.

As a result of the protest, patients are being referred to neighbouring health facilities while an urgent meeting has been convened to resolve the situation.

At Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital, it is alleged that general orderlies who are employed by a private contractor are demanding to be employed permanently by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health.

Hospital management reports that the SAPS had to be called in to restore order after the protesters locked the hospital main gate with a chain. It is also alleged that sections of the hospital were deliberately flooded, causing damage to stationery and hospital equipment.

In the Greater Kokstad area, EG& Usher Memorial hospital also experienced disruptions when people who were dressed in political party regalia, stormed into the hospital and demanded to speak to the CEO. Two neighbouring clinics were closed as a precaution.

The Department is very concerned about these developments which have meant that people have not been able to gain access into our facilities, thus compromising lives. While people have a right to protest, to voice their unhappiness, violence, intimidation, infringement of other people's right to access health services and damaging of government property can never be justified. We hope that the police will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the perpetrators of these acts are arrested, prosecuted and if found guilty, made to face the full might of the law.

ENDS

Issued by Corporate Communications: KZN Department of Health.