

It is a fallacy that the Department is discriminating against its own doctors in favour of Libyans for Specialist training; says Health MEC

2 May 2017

KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has raised a motion in the KZN Legislature dispelling the notion that the Department is funding training of Libyan specialists to the detriment of South African doctors.

MEC Dhlomo says that there is no truth or accuracy in the media report that alleges that the MEC and the Department of Health are supporting the training of Libyan Doctors as specialists whilst "side-lining" local Doctors for the same.

The Libyan Doctors are not part of the Department's staff, nor on any posts that are held and paid for by the Department. They are actually supernumeraries recruited by the Medical School [UKZN]. We want it to be known that supernumeraries are not only from Libya but from other African countries as well.

The whole exercise is aimed at developing specialists for Africa. In essence, they are not blocking any posts."

MEC continued giving clarity on the matter, saying: "For KZN, Registrar training has never been halted – it continues as evidenced by the registrar posts that will be advertised in June 2017, for the January 2018 registrar training intake."

MEC Dhlomo also raised another motion clarifying the Department's stance on the highly publicized forthcoming march by its employees affiliated to the South African Medical Association, [SAMA].

Media reports have quoted Dr Mvuyisi Mzukwa, Branch chairperson of the SAMA KZN Coastal Region as saying that the march is aimed at creating public awareness of the "poor state of health care in KZN."

MEC Dhlomo says it came as a shock that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health got itself inundated with media queries regarding this impending industrial action by SAMA, as these alleged grievances are yet to be raised with the department.

Giving an account of the Department's dealings with SAMA, MEC Dhlomo said:

"SAMA wrote a letter on 4 April 2017 requesting for a meeting with the department. The request was agreed to by the department and a meeting was scheduled for 04 May 2017. The Head of Health was willing to meet with SAMA after working hours on an earlier date but this was declined by the organization. The Department has been informed by SAMA that it is only willing to meet with the Department on 09 May 2017, after the scheduled industrial action."

"Again, the Department is particularly concerned that the little that it knows about the alleged grievances and the so-called strike is what it has seen being ventilated in the media. We have Not received any formal grievance(s) from SAMA, as per standard labour relations procedure. As such, the Department remains convinced that the numerous avenues available to SAMA, to air its grievances so that they can be discussed with a view to finding an amicable solution for all concerned, have not been exhausted. In fact, some of the issues that have been discussed in the media and described as grievances by SAMA are known to the Department, and are already receiving its attention, and being addressed."

MEC Dhlomo also raised concerns on the similarities between what SAMA has purportedly been raising and the questions posed by the DA in the health Portfolio Committee meeting