

KZN Health MEC applauds the court decision to grant postponement on the Ambulance case

4 May 2017

The magistrate court in Newcastle has now postponed the case against the taxi owner charged with stripping Ambulances to 6 June 2017.

The postponement request for further investigation was granted after the state revealed that new evidence of more people being involved and additional stripped Ambulances were uncovered.

The case involves a syndicate operating in Amajuba Health District said to have been stripping gearboxes and other parts of VW Crafter ambulances and fitting them into 22 seater taxi busses of the accused whose case was remanded.

MEC Dhlomo was in court again today and said he is pleased that the Magistrate agreed to allow for postponement as this matter requires further investigation; The MEC reiterated his deepest concern that when perpetrated affects the most vulnerable in our society – people who need emergency medical care who then find themselves being transported in vehicles laden with scrap and defective parts.

"If these vehicles were transporting building material and they break down as a result of defective parts; this would result in the delay of houses' completion. The difference here is that these are emergency vehicles meant to save lives. A life you cannot replace – how selfish!"

MEC Dhlomo says they have henceforth broaden the scope of the investigation to all health Districts with special focus to those in charge who could not pick up strange patterns of breakdowns in short intervals. He revealed that in one instance, an Ambulance is said to have used a R215 000 worth of petrol in a span of three months; *we have initiated an investigation on this matter.*

Again, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo thanked the police for their sterling work in unearthing this scam and also requested the Department's employees to come forward to reveal what they know.