

KZN Health MEC extremely worried about the alleged sale of university medical places

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KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has expressed his shock and dismay following reports that a Durban syndicate has been taking bribes and selling medical posts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

A weekend newspaper alleged that the three interacted suspects ran a calculated scheme, where they would interact with interested parents, negotiate bribes and liaise with university staff who helped get the parents' children enrolled. This was allegedly done even though the students involved did not meet the minimum requirements for the courses.

The three suspects who appeared in the Pinetown Magistrate Court yesterday are said to have charged R250 000 for admission to the health sciences faculty. This included pharmacy, optometry and audiology. They allegedly charged R500 000 for a place in medicine. It is further claimed the trio were involved in the sale of examination question and answer papers for an additional R30 000.

Three people were arrested in Durban on Friday, following a sting operation by the Hawks during this year's admission period, where students were admitted into the University for a Bribe.

Reacting to the news, MEC Dhlomo said: *"We would like to commend the Hawks, SAPS and all other parties involved in this operation, which has led to these arrests. The Department has an extremely valuable and strategic partnership with UKZN, which has borne a lot of fruit in terms of improving health outcomes in the Province.*

In fact, UKZN and its School of Medicine is a paragon on excellence, having produced great leaders in the sphere of medicine, such as our former Premiers; Dr Zweli Mkhize and his predecessor, the late Dr Frank Mdlalose; the current Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, the Deputy Health Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla and a host of others.

MEC Dhlomo also applauded the stance taken by the UKZN Vice Chancellor, Professor Albert van Jaarsveld who pronounced that the University will probe this matter further in order to expose and uproot all those involved in this scam.

The MEC went on to say that even though this matter is now subject to an investigation by the authorities, he is extremely concerned that some individuals might have fraudulently got into the health system through the syndicate saying: *"The field of health sciences cannot be likened to any other, because it is about life and death. As such, there is absolutely no room for people to commit fraud in this or any other manner. Indeed, such actions fly in the face of all our efforts to transform the health sector and ensure that deserving students from all regions get an equal opportunity to study health sciences – not just those whose parents can afford a bribe."*