

MEC Dhlomo is disgusted by allegations of the indecent assault of patients at Cato Manor Community Healthcare Centre, Lay Counsellor immediately suspended

01 February 2018

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has expressed his shock and disgust following allegations by five pregnant women that they were indecently assaulted by a 45 year-old lay counsellor at Cato Manor Community Health Centre earlier this week. (Lay counsellors are normally responsible for patient education that helps to facilitate and promote basic knowledge about HIV as well as adherence to treatment.)

It is alleged that on Tuesday (30 January 2018), the five pregnant women were overheard in the corridors of the health facility, talking among themselves about how the male lay counsellor had touched their private parts individually during their consultation with him. Others were allegedly told to take off their panties and then he touched their genitals with a glove.

The clients were subsequently interviewed by a senior manager who alerted district management.

The lay counsellor has since been suspended pending a formal investigation into the matter. His hearing is scheduled for 15 February 2018.

The Department understands that no formal criminal charges had been laid yet against the lay counsellor.

Reacting to the incident, MEC Dhlomo said: *"We are really taken aback by these allegations. The Department has no place for people who prey on unsuspecting clients by perpetrating such an atrocity. As a Department, we are always making a clarion call on women to present themselves to health facilities as soon as they suspect that they may be pregnant. We always preach the gospel that those who have been confirmed to be pregnant must attend antenatal clinics and follow the schedule as prescribed by healthcare workers. Now, for someone to allegedly violate these women in this manner really flies in the face of all of our efforts. The mere thought of something like this is sickening. We hope the law will take its course and rid the Department of this bad apple."*



English | isiZulu