

Road crash claims lives of young doctor and nurse: MEC Dhlomo sends his condolences

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The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health has yet again lost two valuable employees to sudden and unexpected death. In the early hours of today (04 February 2018), a doctor and the mother of his three month-old baby, who was a nurse, lost their lives in a road crash on Hospital Street, Newcastle.

The doctor, who is originally from Nelspruit, was trained in Cuba and had only a few months to complete his internship at Newcastle Provincial Hospital. The nurse was based at Madadeni Hospital, where the doctor began his internship. Both healthcare were in their mid-to-late 20s. They sustained extensive burns during the crash.

They cannot be named as processes to inform their next of kin are still unfolding. The exact circumstances that led to the crash will form the subject of an investigation by law enforcement authorities.

News of the demise of these staff members comes as Dr Sakheni Ncube from Dundee Hospital was buried at Ermelo yesterday. He passed away after being swept by floods during a heavy storm in Dundee.

MEC Dhlomo says he is deeply concerned at the increasing number of healthcare professionals who are dying young.

This is becoming too much. In addition to the devastation, pain and human suffering that that is caused by these deaths, this is also taking its toll on Government. Doctors are in short supply in this country. The state spends a lot of money investing in these cadres to improve health outcomes in the province, only for them to pass away just as we are about to reap the fruits of our investment. For us to keep losing our doctors in the prime of their lives when we still expect so much from them, is really sad. It is a huge blow to us because doctors continue working until they are very old, so if he was in his late 20s, we've lost more nearly 40 years of his service, he said.

The MEC sends his deepest condolences to the families of the bereaved, and has also urged all healthcare professionals to secure their future through taking life cover so that their families are not found wanting in the event of sudden and unexpected death.

Many of our young people come from poor families, who expect a lot from them when they graduate and become doctors. I would therefore like to urge all doctors, and healthcare professionals in general, to ensure that they have life insurance cover so that when they pass away, they leave something behind for their families.