TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 22 JUNE 2009
EMBARGO: NONE

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, appeals to health workers to return to work

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health wishes to appeal to all health workers (doctors, dentists, pharmacists and emergency medical practitioners) who have not reported for duty to return to work.

This follows reports from some hospitals reporting that there are doctors who have heeded the call to engage in unprotected strike. The major hospitals that are affected are in the eThekwini and surrounding Districts. These include RK Khan, Addington, Osindisweni, Prince Mshiyeni Memorial, Wentworth, King George, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial, King Edward (where there is a gathering and demonstrations), Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central, Stanger, and Greys Hospitals. At least sixty (60) percent of health care workers who were called to strike have reported for duty in these districts. All provincial report will be released in due course.

"The Minister of Health has asked us, MECs, to appeal to those who are protesting to return to work and serve the poor people in need of medical care. He also appealed that the current negotiations, which will resume on Wednesday (24 June 2009), be allowed to conclude. We are on record committing ourselves to an amicable resolution of these negotiations. We have already asked the South African Defence Force to assist and we are asking General Practitioners to assist in the affected hospitals" says the MEC for Health, Dr SM Dhlomo. The MEC is currently working at one of the Durban's hospitals assisting those who are working. He will also address the gathering outside the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine.

We take this opportunity to apologise to our clients for the inconvenience that they are presently experiencing. The Department will keep the public informed through regular press releases on the situation.

For more information contact Chris Maxon at 0832850567.

ENDS

ISSUED BY:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL