

TO: ALL MEDIA
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THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TAKES THE FORENSIC SERVICES
SITUATION VERY SERIOUSLY

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health notes the march that was held on Saturday, under the banner of the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), by the forensic workers under the Department of Health.

The Head of Department has held meetings with the union representing these workers where certain allegations were laid and the HoD promised to revert back to them with answers in due course. The workers also complained about their working conditions as well as their salaries.

It would be remembered that the workers were previously under the South African Police Service (SAPS), before the department took over the running of forensic services throughout the country. Some of the problems that the workers are complaining about were inherited by the department when it took over the forensic services from the SAPS.

A meeting was held last month and the investigations are currently underway with regards to some of the allegations tabled before me. The labour relations paradigm in this country dictates that matters of working conditions and salaries are negotiated at a central level, the Public Service Central Bargaining Council. The department views this matter not only in the light of having to address the working conditions of workers but one that requires deeper thought and shift to ensure that the forensic services supports its clients in a professional manner.

"I intend engaging all relevant stakeholders with a view of ensuring that the people who work in the forensic services are able to execute their work in a professional manner. This includes ensuring that workers comply with certain minimum standards of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and other regulatory bodies. So, if we train people we must have a point of reference that would guide such training. We also intend to investigate and model against other countries so that we are in line with international trends and practices" says Dr. Sibongile Zungu, Head of Department in the Department of Health.

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