

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 30 NOVEMBER 2009

EMBARGO: NONE

Process efficiency cannot be equated to "tardiness"

The Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal is doing its utmost best to process all applications for extensions in private hospitals as it possibly can and such processing cannot be described as being "tardy".

The department has to ensure that, in terms of the Regulations Governing Private Hospitals and Unattached Operating Theatre Units (No. R434 of 19 March 1993); *"the private hospital or unattached operating-theatre unit is not managed or will not be managed in a manner which will be detrimental to the physical, mental or moral welfare of the patients or staff;"* and this obligation placed on the Head of Department cannot be executed in a manner that seeks to appease the interest of private health providers at the expense of the well being of the people and staff. It is a stewardship role that the department takes seriously without fear or favour.

The process, in itself, is a laborious exercise as numerous factors are taken into account before this far reaching decision can be made. High quality of health service is of utmost importance to the department. The Head of Department, for representativity and efficiency, has disbanded the existing committee and already reconstituted a more inclusive committee. She is also in the process of redefining the process within the constraints of regulation (158) in order to make it more efficient.

It is therefore not "tardy" on the part of the Head of Department to want process efficiency but a concern for patient and staff lives. The Department will be finalizing all applications within reasonable time.

ENDS

**ISSUED BY:
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL**