

KZN Department of Health serious about fighting corruption

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health remains committed than ever in uprooting and eradicating all forms of corruption, regardless of who it is perpetrated by.

As the world commemorates International Anti-Corruption Day tomorrow, 09 December 2014, the Department would like to send a strong warning, even to those who are hell bent on defrauding the taxpayer through corrupt activities that their days are numbered.

To bear testimony to its zero-tolerance stance against corruption, the Department recently took the following bold steps in a bid to stamp out this scourge:

- No fewer than 22 full-time state health workers who have “moonlighted” by working in the private sector have to pay back more than R2,9m;
- According to a forensic audit by the Department, no fewer than 157 of its employees had traded with provincial government departments since 2012, and the value of the transactions is R82.1m. The Department estimates a total recovery of R 9 877 731.47, after analyzing and calculating the shareholding of the Department employees within the entities and/or companies.
- At least 42 employees resigned from their positions before investigations into their conduct had been included.

Disciplinary processes have also commenced in relation to the employees concerned and the Department has engaged the Provincial Treasury to assist with restricting the relevant companies, linked to the Department of Health employees from trading with the State in future.

Defrauding of medical aid schemes by healthcare professionals:

It will be recalled that Section 30 of the Public Service Act (PSA), 1994 [as amended] provides that employees in the public sector shall not perform Remunerative Work Outside Public Practice (RWOPS); except with the written permission of the executive authority (MEC) of the department.

In lieu of the above; investigations have shown that a total of 407 (Four Hundred and Seven) Healthcare Professionals within the Department have been found to be claiming through various Medical Aid Schemes whilst in the employment of the Department.

The total value of claims processed by our Healthcare Professionals through various Medical Aid Schemes amounts to R 151 699 054.78 (One Hundred and Fifty One Million Six Hundred and Ninety Nine Thousand and Fifty Four Rand and Seventy Eight Cents).

Of the total sum stated, the Department estimates an amount of R 15 169 905.48 (Fifteen Million One Hundred and Sixty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred and Five Rand and Forty Eight Cents); as being recoverable.

Whilst disciplinary inquiries for a total of 407 (Four Hundred and Seven) Healthcare Professionals within the Department have commenced; it has been noted that five (5) of the employees have since resigned and four (4) cases have been registered with the South African Police Services (SAPS) for criminal investigation – re: defrauding Medical Aid Schemes.

In a joint statement, KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo and KwaZulu-Natal Health

Head of Department, Dr Sibongile Zungu, said:

“As a Department, we have a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and corruption, and we would like to appeal to all the department’s employees to ensure that they operate within the law, or they risk dire consequences, including prosecution. If anyone is uncertain of the legality of any of their operations, they should seek counsel from Human Resources.”

Ends

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health
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