

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA alarmed by rise in Mpox cases in KwaZulu-Natal**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is gravely concerned by the rapid escalation of the Mpox outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal, which has resulted in a third fatality since the outbreak in May 2024.

The latest victim, a 40-year-old male from Ladysmith, presented with Mpox-like symptoms, including a rash, and succumbed to the disease at his residence on June 23, 2024, without seeking medical attention at a healthcare facility.

The PSA is alarmed by the potential for further transmission of the disease, particularly in densely populated areas and amongst vulnerable populations. As of June 2024, South Africa has reported 16 laboratory-confirmed cases of Mpox, with 13 cases in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, and one case in the Western Cape. In light of this situation, the PSA urges citizens and public servants to exercise extreme vigilance and comply with infection control measures at work and at home to prevent the spread of Mpox.

The PSA recommends enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols in public spaces and workplaces, strict adherence to personal protective equipment usage, implementation of social distancing measures and increased awareness campaigns to educate the public on Mpox prevention and management to contain the spread of the disease. Furthermore, the PSA demands that the Department of Health and the Office of the Premier in KwaZulu-Natal scale up contact tracing and testing, provide adequate resources and support for healthcare workers as well as establishing dedicated Mpox treatment centres.

The PSA urges citizens to take personal responsibility for preventing the spread of Mpox by practicing good hygiene, avoiding close contact with infected individuals, and seeking medical attention immediately if symptoms arise.

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