

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA appalled by handling of COVID-19 cases by Limpopo Department of Health Waterberg District**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked by the behaviour of the Limpopo Department of Health's Waterberg District Executive Manager (DEM), after 20 employees tested positive for COVID-19 earlier this week.

The PSA was alerted by frustrated and concerned employees regarding the escalating number of positive cases and the employer not providing any direction, leaving employees exposed. The PSA went to the office, but the DEM was not present. In addition, employees at work reportedly had no mandate or direction from the DEM and no action could be taken as employees waited outside the building owing to fears about entering the offices.

The PSA attempted to contact the DEM, seeking direction on the situation, but no response was received. The DEM, however, allegedly called the office to give an instruction that the PSA should not be engaged as it did not have an appointment. It is unheard of that, in case of emergency, the normal rules should apply when the safety of employees is at stake. The PSA thus called the DEM's superiors who came to the rescue of employees. Shockingly, these superiors were unaware of the high number of cases in the office, indicating that the DEM is not taken this matter seriously.

Subsequently, a meeting was held with management with the guidance by the Head Office. It was resolved that COVID-19 testing will continue and that the nearest hospital will be approached to assist with disinfecting the building. Employees were released to allow for the disinfection and those who tested positive will be afforded ten days' sick leave.

The PSA calls on the Department to investigate the DEM's conduct as it does not instil confidence with employees regarding the value of their health and safety.

END