

MEDIA RELEASE PSA concerned about state of Limpopo's public health system

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned about reports that patients with chronic illnesses in Limpopo are defaulting on critical treatment owing to understaffing, long waiting periods and medication being out of stock.

The report by *Ritshidze Project* revealed that the province is unable to meet the United Nation's HIV Sustainable Development Goals, which is concerning as it demonstrates the inability of the province to respond to the HIV challenge.

The PSA previously called on the Limpopo Department of Health to address the issues of staffing and medical supplies at most facilities in the province. Patients are queuing for longer than four hours and then still fail to get their medication. This also exposes employees to the risk of being attacked by irate patients. The situation is dire as most patients are vulnerable, particularly the elderly and the poor from rural areas, who are forced to use limited resources for transport, only to return home empty handed. Patients often queue from 04:00, only to be told they cannot be helped. The reality is that the Department has failed to address these issues since being raised by the PSA and the Office of the Public Protector in 2020. The Department is failing the people of Limpopo as it unwittingly contributes to patients defaulting on taking their medication, with a negative impact on quality of life.

The PSA calls on the National Department of Health to immediately intervene before the situation deteriorates further, as patients will eventually stop visiting health facilities. The PSA will be left with no choice by to refer the matter to the Human Rights Commission as the rights of people in the province are being trampled.

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