

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes engagement by Eastern Cape Health Portfolio Committee amidst healthcare crisis
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes recent engagement by the Eastern Cape Health Portfolio Committee during a critical meeting held at Uitenhage Provincial Hospital on 16 January 2025.

The PSA remains committed to advocating for the interests of the Union's members and ensuring that the voices of workers and communities are heard. The meeting, which extended over six hours and required continuation on the following day, addressed pressing issues at Nelson Mandela Metro health facilities. Key concerns raised by unions, councillors, and stakeholders included staff shortages leading to overworked and exhausted employees struggling to meet patient demands owing to unfilled positions. There was a call for improved safety and security, with unfenced facilities and a lack of 24/7 security leaving staff and the public vulnerable to crime. Unions also raised the issue of service delivery failures where patients endure long waiting times for medical attention, often queuing from the early hours of the morning. There are also bed shortages, and despite a dire need some wards remain underutilised. Healthcare facilities also face leadership instability, an example being the unexplained removal of Uitenhage Hospital CEO, which has raised significant concern.

The Portfolio Committee, led by Chairperson, Ms Koliswa Vimbayo, accompanied by Eastern Cape Health MEC, Ms Ntandokazi Capa, alongside MPLs from various political parties, sought accountability from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan District Management Team. Several key commitments were made, including staffing solutions by conducting a post-to-person audit to allocate staff correctly and address undue reshuffling. Decentralising medication distribution with chronic medication being dispensed at alternative locations, such as community halls and churches, to reduce clinic congestion and leadership stability with efforts to resolve the return of the Uitenhage Hospital CEO are being prioritised. The District Office has been given two weeks to implement these measures and report back to the Portfolio Committee.

The PSA is encouraged by the commitments made and the focus on accountability. The PSA will continue to monitor developments and engage stakeholders to ensure follow-through on the outlined plans. The PSA remains steadfast in advocating for improved working conditions for healthcare workers and better services for the public.

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