

MEDIA RELEASE: PSA welcomes relocation of employees from Civitas building

DATE: 8 January 2021

EMBARGO: None

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The PSA, as a major Union representing employees of the National Department of Health, welcomes the decision to immediately relocate employees of the Department based at the Civitas Building in Pretoria.

After years of complaints by employees, reports of injury and illness on duty and a court battle by the PSA, the Department is being forced to move from the building. While plans for a new head office building are being finalised, the Department's city-based staff will move to the old Exxaro building in Pretoria West.

The PSA has continuously engaged with the Department and insisted that the Civitas building at the corner of Thabo Sehume and Struben Streets was completely unsafe and unsuitable to accommodate employees. The PSA has for years been raising the Department's non-adherence to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* as well as maintenance challenges experienced in the Civitas building. In the past, PSA members occupied the steps of the building in protest against the building being a health and safety hazard. Inspections by the Department of Employment and Labour identified safety gaps. When the Department failed to respond, the PSA instituted litigation before the court against the Departments of Health and Public Works.

The court case also challenged the spending of more than R1 billion to renovate the Civitas building between 2010 and 2011, whereas it remained an unsuitable place to work.

The Department of Health has now finally realised that the building is unsafe and not conducive for productivity of employees. The PSA is pleased that this saga is finally over and will continue to engage all Government departments where employees are exposed to workplace health and safety risks.

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