

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes suspension of Circulars by Limpopo Department of Health
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the decision by the Limpopo Health MEC, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, to suspend Departmental Circulars issued related to changing working hours and requiring performance of employees in contravention of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA)*.

Circulars 43 of 2020 and 4 of 2021 are amended by Circulars 17 and 18 of 2021 respectively pending the outcome of a pilot project that will be introduced soon. The PSA views the decision as a move in the right direction although the Union would have preferred the complete withdrawal of the Circulars as these caused much animosity in the Department. The decision could have been taken much earlier if the Department was willing to listen to workers' concerns. It, however, took threats of strike and picketing for the employer to suspend the Circulars.

Employees were put under tremendous pressure and even threatened with dismissal if they were not prepared to comply with impractical rosters that were in contravention of both the *OHSA* and the *BCEA*. Employees were even accused of manipulating the overtime system and looting from the employer when they were sacrificing personal and family time to serve the people of Limpopo. The Department was unable to fill vacancies owing to budgetary constraints, which resulted in employees also having to cover the work of those who left the Department but instead of being appreciated, they were insulted and labelled as thieves.

Although labour is still in the dark in terms of how the pilot project is going to work, it is encouraging that the employer is acknowledging that due diligence was not conducted, and the roster was developed without considering institutional dynamics and challenges.

It is trusted that the MEC and her Executives have learnt from this fiasco and the PSA further calls on the employer to also withdraw the suspension of shop stewards who were provoked by the issuance of the oppressive Circulars.

END