

Media statement

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DENOSA dismayed by Eastern Cape's underspending despite huge infrastructure backlog and non-payment of nurses

Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) in the Eastern Cape is dismayed that the provincial government has yet again failed to exhaust its budget allocation and had to return funds to Treasury, and calls for heads to roll as a result of this sin.

DENOSA is especially irked by the returned funds for salaries when there is still a huge backlog of unpaid accruals that is due to health workers dating as far back as 2009.

The provincial government failed to spend R1.47 billion on its budget allocation for the financial year that ended in March, with just over R1bn of this meant for salaries. Furthermore, the Department of Health, among others, had not spent funds at the time when the province is short of more than 9000 nurses.

"This clearly shows that the department lacks the capacity within its human resource division, where people are not able to pay workers what is due to them. Whoever is in such positions should consider vacating them, because the whole health department in the province is going down with them, and that is not acceptable," says Koliswa Tota, DENOSA Provincial Secretary in the Eastern Cape.

"While there is a shortage of over 9000 nurses in the province, the department is still refusing to pay the currently overworked nursing staff accruals in overtime, night duty allowances among others since 2009, despite being given R191 million by the provincial department to pay these accruals to health workers. And there are no consequences for this mischief."

DENOSA deems it fair to say the health department in the province has become extremely numb and inconsiderate of the health workers' rightful demands as well as to the needs of basic service delivery to the communities in this province, especially the poorest of the poor who are the majority. Under normal circumstances, some drastic actions should have long been taken by now.

What is clear is that the anger of health workers over this incompetence by the department is brewing beyond tolerable levels, and rightfully so. Because of poor financial management systems and processes in the department, health workers are being subjected to slavery where, every morning, they have to borrow money for transport in order to go to work because they are not being paid, whereas the department returns millions of salary payments back to the Treasury.

The complete overhaul of the HR management is necessary if nurses are to remain in this province.

As DENOSA, we have reached a point where we are not able to forgive this long chain of unnecessary blunders, when linens at Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital are getting

contaminated because there is no sufficient equipment to wash or dry them. It is unfair, and it's time drastic action is taken.

End

Issued by Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA)

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