



NEHAWU STATEMENT ON THE LAUNCH OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY CAMPAIGN FOCUSING ON PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN THE EASTERN CAPE

MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday October 13, 2025

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] has called this media briefing to communicate to our members, workers and the public about resuscitating of our National Public Service Delivery Campaign focusing on Public Healthcare System Nationally with specific focus in the Eastern Cape in particular Nelson Mandela Health District.

The resuscitation occurs against the background of a damning report by the Public Protector on the state of healthcare in particular Nelson Mandela Bay with a central focus on Dora Nginza Regional Hospital.

The state of healthcare system in the Nelson Mandela Health District is confronted by insurmountable challenges which range from corruption, maladministration, nepotism, staff shortages, dilapidated healthcare infrastructure, shortage of medicines and food for patients.

The Public Protector initiated an investigation into the state of affairs at Dora Nginza Regional Hospital but broadly the province, following reports that pregnant women, awaiting admission for critical caesarean section surgeries were forced to sleep on the floor and chairs at the hospital.

Indeed, the Public Protector conducted her investigation and made findings upon completion of the investigation. The findings are damning about state of healthcare system in the province especially Nelson Mandela Bay, which is confronted by systematic failures in the provision of basic health services, including neglect of patients, prolonged waiting times, and compromised healthcare delivery.

The report by the Public Protector does not shock nor surprise us as NEHAWU, as we have long made a conclusion that the healthcare services in the province are in a dire state that require urgent attention.



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As far back in 2020, at the peak of COVID-19, the union produced a fact-finding report following after our National Office Bearers had visited health institutions across the country.

The fact-finding report had highlighted that across various institutions there was lack of compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, shortage of staff, poor and broken management system, dysfunctional district health system and poor infrastructure and poor adherence to National Core Standards.

The report was submitted to the National Department of Health, Provincial Health Departments, Office of the President, Alliance partners and also the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organisation. However, much of what had been highlighted in the report has not been addressed.

In fact, the situation has worsened to a point whereby there are failures in the provision of basic health services to an extent that pregnant women are forced to sleep on chairs awaiting services.

This continuous failure by the Department of Health especially in this province in addressing challenges confronting the healthcare system is appalling. Indeed, the department has demonstrated beyond any reason doubt that it does not value nor care about the healthcare system and this is evident by the deplorable state of healthcare in this province.

It is totally unacceptable that the department has neglected its duty of ensuring that the people receive quality healthcare services. How does the department explain what is currently unfolding with the state of health services in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan?



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As NEHAWU, we have on numerous occasions called on the department of health to urgently attend to the collapsing Public Healthcare System, however our calls have fallen on deaf ears.

The situation highlights the crisis of governance and management that is very acute across the health sector in the province, and this requires urgent intervention before a catastrophe occurs.

The situation in hospitals, healthcare centres, clinics and medical depot in Nelson Mandela Health District is appalling and compromises provision of quality healthcare services to thousands of people across the health district as the system is characterised by maladministration, nepotism, etc.

Currently, as we convene this media briefing, those directed by the Public Protector have not complied with the recommended remedial actions by the Public Protector, which include amongst others:

- Implementation Plan for the establishment or conversion of Empilweni TB Hospital to a District Hospital in the Nelson Mandela Health District.
- A detailed report/plan, which includes timelines, indicating how the critical shortage of both medical and non-clinical staff within the health facility will be addressed.
- A detailed report/plan, which includes timelines, indicating when the kitchen and laundry of Dora Nginza Regional Hospital will be relocated according to the Revitalisation of Infrastructure Project for which funds have been made available by the Department, including procurement of new equipment.
- Recruitment process for the vacant position of non-clinical staff at the Dora Nginza Regional Hospital is finalised.
- A report/ plan which includes dates and timelines on how the provision of security inside the wards will be addressed.



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As such, the union has ventured into this programme to ensure that the remedial actions are implemented without fail as directed by the Public Protector report.

In this regard, the union has written to the Minister of Health, MEC of Health and the Head of Department seeking accountability on how they have complied with the remedial actions.

Equally, we will be visiting workplaces across the health district as part of our campaign to ensure that there is compliance and safe working conditions in these institutions.

In our view, this is a battle worth fighting for, the union will not tire without ensuring that such legally binding recommendations are implemented and that communities receives necessary quality healthcare services.

Furthermore, the union is contemplating to write to the Public Protector express its intentions to enforce the implementation of remedial action as we view the non-compliance as tantamount to contempt of Public Protector's legally binding remedial actions.

NEHAWU as revolutionary and transformative red-union, is embarking on this campaign with an intention to achieve improved quality service to our people in order to better their lives particularly, the working class and the poor as well as contributing to the building of a capable and developmental state that intervenes to societal needs.

This campaign is inspired by the union's orientation, amidst the prevailing worsening living conditions of our people and poor service triggered by the neo-liberal policy of austerity, to build public service cadre that places the interests of society, the working class in particular at the centre of the service given its strategic location at the point of service.

This campaign will necessitate the government to urgently address the challenges confronting health in the province.

Indeed, the public service delivery campaign is a tool at the disposal of the union to transform the public healthcare system for the benefit of our people.

On Friday 17th October, we will resuscitate our national public service delivery campaign with a march to submit a memorandum of demands to address the challenges confronting healthcare in the province.

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