

MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RESPONSE TO THE DA'S BASELESS AND MISLEADING ALLEGATIONS ON LIMPOPO EMS

The Limpopo Department of Health has noted with disappointment the spurious, misleading, and desperate claims made by the Democratic Alliance (DA) regarding the state of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the province. These allegations are not only factually incorrect but also disregard the significant progress made by the Department in improving emergency healthcare service delivery for the people of Limpopo.

Fact 1: Limpopo EMS is Growing, Not Collapsing

Contrary to the DA's false assertions, Limpopo's EMS is on a positive and undeniable upward trajectory. Just this past week, MEC for Health Dr. Dieketseng Mashego unveiled a state-of-the-art Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, a progressive technology platform designed to ensure faster and more accurate ambulance response times across the province. Alongside the system launch, the MEC also handed over 48 new EMS vehicles, which include 36 Planned Patient Transport (PPT) vehicles, 10 Rescue Vehicles, and 2 Renal Patient Transport units.

This handover is in addition to the more than 500 ambulances acquired during the previous financial year, bringing the current operational EMS fleet to 740 vehicles, a massive leap from the fleet of just over 100 vehicles Limpopo had a few years ago. These are not signs of a "collapsed" system, but rather of a system on the rise.

Fact 2: EMS Personnel Are Qualified and Strategically Deployed

The Department categorically rejects the DA's false claim that ambulances are operated by unqualified personnel. Currently, Limpopo EMS boasts 422 Intermediate Life Support (ILS) personnel, 19 Advanced Life Support (ALS) professionals, and 19 Paramedics. All EMS teams are qualified at the appropriate levels, and crew deployment is done strategically, ensuring that qualifications complement each other to provide optimal care during emergencies. This model has always been in place and is consistent with national EMS standards.

Furthermore, EMS staff are provided with ongoing training and upskilling opportunities. Due to operational demands, not all personnel can be released for training at once, but the department continues to send staff in rotational batches to attain higher qualifications across various accredited institutions. This challenge is not unique to Limpopo; it is a longstanding, sector-wide issue across all provinces, and it is misleading for the DA to sensationalise it now as if it were a new crisis.

Fact 3: EMS Training College in Limpopo is Being Revitalised

The Department acknowledges the importance of having a fully accredited EMS training facility within the province. Efforts are well underway to regain full accreditation for the EMS College, including the appointment process of a Principal, Infrastructure upgrades, procurement of training equipment, and recruitment of qualified academic staff. In the meantime, the college has been offering Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) courses to ensure staff remain current with their competencies.

Fact 4: Aeromedical Services Are Fully Compliant

The DA's allegations regarding Limpopo's aeromedical services are equally unfounded. All aircraft deployed by the Department are staffed by appropriately trained and qualified EMS personnel. No requirement in the Act stipulates a "medical practitioner" must be on board. The paramedics on board meet the necessary qualifications and are fully competent to handle emergencies.

Conclusion: Delivering on Budget Promises

The recent EMS enhancements are not coincidental; they are the direct result of promises made during previous budget speeches, now fulfilled through consistent, strategic investments in EMS infrastructure, technology, and human resources. The Department views the DA's statement as a politically motivated attempt to distort progress and undermine confidence in a service that is in fact, expanding, improving, and delivering real value to the people of Limpopo. All these facts certainly point to an EMS system that is rising in resilience to meet the needs of the people as opposed to DA's inflammatory pronouncements of collapse. But the department understands the DA's pain and jealousy. It can never be easy for the DA to accept that the EMS that it has used as a Trojan horse for many years to attack the government, amass public and media spotlight, has risen like a phoenix. The department is committed to continuing to serve the people of Limpopo with integrity, dignity, and professionalism.

END

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