

NETCARE WORKERS UPDATE



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Inspections by the Department of Labour on Health and Safety Violations in the Private Sector Health Looms

HOSPERSA has raised objections with NETCARE on Health & Safety matters at various intervals over the years, and the levels of commitment by Management on such matters have not revealed any sense of priority on the issues.

As a result, many concerns resurface, many employees are unaware of their rights, and our members health & safety rights at work are constantly undermined. There are neither regional nor National committees where such matters can be raised for the necessary attention, and hospital safety committees appear to be ill effective in dealing with large scale issues that affect many Netcare staff.

An earlier complaint handled by Hospersa was the provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) after exposure to blood and bodily fluids for the prevention of HIV transmission. This matter was reported Nationally and was attended to through national intervention. Assurance was given through the Netcare policy on exposure to blood and bodily fluids, guaranteeing that our members have access to

the necessary prevention measures. The practice and adherence to this policy has not always been up to par. In another complaint around renovations and dust levels and its impact on patient safety in a theatre, took concerted effort and persistence from the union to finally be resolved. This, despite patient safety being a fundamental matter in any health service. In this instant a regional intervention was proposed.

The most recent, controversy amongst our members has been the refusal by Management to provide theatre staff with the necessary theatre shoes or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). To add insult to injury, NETCARE Senior Management refused to accede to HOSPERSA's demand for the provision of non slip shoes to all theatre staff, at the wage negotiations held in February 2009.

Hospersa raised the employers duty to protect its employees as enshrined in the laws, but this fell on deaf ears. Senior management, however, did confirm their unequivocal commitment

to provide all their Doctors, as non employees of NETCARE, with safe non slip shoes. Senior Management was of the view that Health & safety matters were not the terrain of wage negotiations, and requested that we deal with such matters through the relevant Health & Safety mechanisms.

Hospersa has raised the following concerns in Netcare, with the Chief Inspector of the Department of Labour for investigation;

1. The failure to provide staff in theatres with non slip shoes
2. The discriminatory practice of providing non employees (doctors) with PPE whilst refusing to supply these to employees at a lower income level.
3. The deductions from salaries made for Personal Protective Equipment (shoes and theatre scrubs) as well as certain uniforms which in our view contravenes section 23 of OHS Act

Whilst we await follow up with the Department of Labour, we will urge Management on the matters at hand, as well as more serious matters which are being brought to our attention.

“Workers have rights in terms of South African health and safety laws. Such laws also prescribe the right of SHE reps, shop stewards and employees to report hazards and risks to workplace health and safety committees, with the intention of preventing accidents, injuries and diseases at work.” - Fazeela Fyers AGS: ETD

Contact Hospersa on 012 365 2021 for more enquiries .