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## MEDIA STATEMENT

### ECDoH WELCOMES THE SENTENCING OF A FORMER EMPLOYEE FOR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT TENDER FRAUD

Bhisho — The Eastern Cape Department of Health welcomes the sentencing of a former employee for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) tender fraud by the Mthatha Specialised Commercial Crimes Court.

The former employee has been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on charges of fraudulently awarding a R23.7-million PPE tender to a private company.

The sentencing sends a strong message that perpetrators of crime will face the full might of the law when found guilty of the such criminal behaviour.

This is also an important milestone for government and serves as a deterrent to other officials who still have intentions to defraud government. Crime never pays and the consequences are dire for both the perpetrator and those who depend on him/her.

MEC for Health Nomakhosazana Meth said the sentencing was in line with the department's zero-tolerance for wrongdoing.

"This sentencing shows that the days of people escaping with a slap on the wrist are gone. Corruption and fraud is a cancer to society that must be rooted out.

"We are happy that wrongdoers are not engaging in their deeds with impunity. When the fraud was brought to the department's attention, we acted swiftly and alerted law enforcement agencies," she said.

Just to note, this was not a tender awarded by the department. The individual forged an award appointment letter but there was no loss to the department.

The incident happened during the time when the country was under the State of Disaster, wherein emergency procurement processes were established.

The controls put in place by the Department helped in preventing any irregular expenditure as a result of the fraudulent transaction.

It was during the period when government was working tirelessly to reduce Covid-19 infections and deaths when the perpetrator used his proximity to the system to commit the fraud.

The Head of Department of Health, Dr Rolene Wagner, concurs with the sentiments of the MEC and expressed appreciation for the SIU and this positive outcome.

"This is evidence of the effectiveness of the collaboration between the SIU and the Department, following the Presidential Proclamation. The department will cooperate with all

investigative and law enforcement agencies in the pursuit of eliminating fraud and corruption" Wagner said.

Issued by the Eastern Cape Department of Health.

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