

16 April 2023

## MEDIA STATEMENT

Bhisho — The Eastern Cape Department of Health strongly condemns the recent hijacking of the department's truck delivering medication in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro.

The incident happened after the truck driver had offloaded medication at NU 8 Clinic in Gqeberha on Friday morning.

Four unknown gun wielding men approached the facility and hijacked the truck after pointing a gun at the driver.

The assailants fled the scene with the truck, still loaded with medication that was meant to be delivered to at least three other facilities in Gqeberha.

Police were called and the delivery truck was later recovered at Sohobese Street in NU11 in Motherwell. One suspect has been arrested.

Health MEC Nomakhosazana Meth condemned the incident.

“We welcome the arrest and thank the SAPS for their swift action in apprehending one of the suspects.

“We condemn this brazen act of criminality with the contempt it deserves. When criminals attack our facilities and steal medicines supplies, the communities we serve, the poorest of the poor who rely on the public sector for their health and care needs, suffer as service delivery is affected.

“We once again call on communities to take ownership of government properties and protect healthcare workers against criminals,” she said.

No injuries were sustained by staff members, however, they were shaken by the incident. Psycho social support has been arranged for the staff.

These heinous crimes put unnecessary strain on the department’s already stretched resources as try to provide the best and possible care.

Such incidents not only contribute to disruptions in services but also make it difficult to attract and retain the scarce skills of health professionals so badly needed in our province.

These incidents may also cause unnecessary delays in the distribution of medication to our clients around the NMBM.

Issued by the Eastern Cape Department of health.