

Lekalakala naming queried

Social development portfolio committee demands answers on how head of department at health was appointed

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THE health and social development portfolio committee has demanded answers on how embattled head of department at health, Dr Thabo Lekalakala was appointed.

Lekalakala is presently on special leave as a forensic investigation on the department following the Mediosa and other scandals is ongoing.

The committee said it had written to MEC, Dr Magome Masike, the general director and the health minister to confirm if Lekalakala was ever a chief director as written on the Z83 form he used to apply for the top post.

The acting head of department, Vuyo Mbulawa, told the committee on Tuesday that MEC Masike had requested Dr Lekalakala to take his annual leave while all issues raised against him are being investigated by the province's general director, Dr Lydia Sebegoe.

The committee had requested the department to come and present the final draft of the annual performance plan (APP), give a brief on the appointment and shed light on the ongoing Nehawu strike.

The committee said the health department had not submitted the APP to the auditor-general (AG) and therefore it felt that it could only attend to it after the AG had seen it.

Mbulawa told the committee that Nehawu was demanding the suspension of Dr Lekalakala, payment of performance bonus, a review on the appointment of employees in acting positions, filling of all vacant posts and termination of contracts with Marang, Mediosa, Buthelezi and High Care.

Committee chairperson Madoda Sambatha said there is ample evidence of wrongdoing on the party of the head



INVESTIGATIONS: Dr Thabo Lekalakala's appointment as head of the North West health department is being questioned by the portfolio committee.

of department hence the call by Nehawu for his suspension.

"State coffers have been looted in front of their eyes. Ordinary people are suffering because of this.

"The strike must be quickly resolved so that tomorrow there is no claim that workers stopped medication from being delivered.

"Make sure you also negotiate a safe passage of medical equipment to go to the depot, hospitals and clinics," Sambatha said.

batha said.

On Lekalakala's appointment, the committee told the department that the man was never a chief director at the national department of health as claimed in the Z83 form.

The requirements for the head of department post as advertised in 2014 stipulated that the candidate, must among others, have been a chief director for more than five years.

"I have confirmed with the general

director and the minister of health who stated clearly that Dr Lekalakala was a director at the department, he was never a chief director.

"We are now requesting them to confirm it in writing so we can take this up," Sambatha said.

Chief financial officer at the department, Bertha Maleka, was asked to confirm what is left on the budget for ARVs as the health department had admitted in the previous meeting that

they used it to pay Buthelezi ambulances and High Care.

She said there was R8.1m, a figure the committee was disputing.

Responding to media question on Lekalakala's leave late last week, Dr Sebegoe said the head of department was supposed to be back at work tomorrow but the nature of progress in investigations may require that the leave be extended.

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