**African Christian Democratic Party**

**10 May 2022

ACDP Parliament
Budget Vote 18: Health
Speech by Marie Sukers MP**

**Over 300 000 submissions received by the Department of Health on the new Regulations on Notifiable Diseases indicates our people’s mistrust**

“Honourable Chairperson,

The ACDP wants to extend our sincere condolences to the families of the patients who lost their lives in the shooting incident that happened at Somerset Hospital. To the family of the young Constable Phillips, who lost his life in the line of duty, we want to express our deepest sorrow for your loss - your loved one is among the hundreds of men and women who answer the call to service, and who in doing so pay the highest price.

A grateful and humbled nation thanks you.

On Sunday, Nursing sister Diane Seale showed strength of character in the face of real danger, and in so doing gave us a lesson to emulate: crisis requires strong leadership, and that what is in you is revealed under severe pressure. Sister Seale showed us in the words of the Chair, Dr Kenneth Jacobs… you can fight a war with nurses!

This incident is evidence of a Health sector that is in a permanent state of crisis, and therefore we must emphasize to the department and the Minister the need for competent strategic leadership to get beyond constant crisis management.

That this level of leadership is not provided is evident because we see that front line health workers, like Sister Seale, have to display heroic leadership qualities, whether that is in everyday decision-making or facing down armed assailants entering what is supposed to be a safe place of care and healing.

Patients and front line workers can’t trust that they will be safe in your facilities, and the over 300 000 submissions received on the new Regulations on Notifiable Diseases indicates that the people of South Africa do not trust this department with any aspect of their health.

That trust can start being rebuilt by the Portfolio Committee showing that it is holding this department accountable for the 58 billion rand that the people of South Africa have allocated to it.

The Auditor General points out that the department’s strategic plans is ambiguous and misaligned. The research capacity of the Portfolio Committee should be expanded to allow the portfolio committee to do proper oversight of the departmental strategy so that these flaws can be fixed.

To see how that strategy, albeit flawed, is executed on the ground, the Committee has been asking the department for the last two years how it will hold provincial departments accountable. We are none the wiser today. Chairperson, is the National Department of Health merely a bank? And if so, why does it need such a large staff?

The Committee needs a regular schedule of engagements with the provincial health departments in order to monitor them, and the Department needs a more rigorous and time-based accountability model to monitor the provinces.

Only by developing a strategy that the whole of South Africa supports, and by ensuring that strategy is implemented, can you gain our people’s trust.”

**-ENDS-

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