# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 517**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 06)**

**Mr A M Shaik Emam (NFP) to ask the Minister of Health: [60][Question submitted for oral reply now placed for written reply because it is in excess of quota (Rule 137(8))]:**

What (a) are the latest developments in a certain matter (details furnished) and (b) steps is his department intending to take to prevent any unnecessary escalation of cost being incurred by the taxpayers as a result of the matter? **NW558E**

**REPLY:**

(a) According to the KZN Province, Dr Shaheem Seedat who was employed at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital in eThekwini, KZN, was suspended and charged for allegedly negligence (causing the death of a motor vehicle accident patient).

On 18 March 2016 he was then charged and subsequently found not guilty.

On 25 February 2019, Dr Seedat issued summons (claim) against the Department of Health, KZN for reputational damage in the sum of R20 650 000.00. In his summons he alleged that during 2016 the MEC for Health made a statement to various media /news that he was suspended and being investigated for the charge of misconduct. According to him such newspaper or social media statements were wrongful and defamatory, causing reputational damage.

The Provincial Department of Health defended the case through the office of the state attorney. The Parties have exchange pleadings. The state attorney reports that the Plaintiff (Dr Seedat’s attorneys) wanted to amend their summons.

At this stage there is no date for the trial yet. The Plaintiff (Dr Seedat) will have to apply for it. The notice to amend is still awaited.

(b) The Department of Health, KZN (the employer) is obliged to investigate any alleged misconduct by its employees. The acquittal does not mean that misconduct did not occur. According to the Department of Health, KZN, the claim for damage in the sum of R20 650 000.00 by Dr Seedat is not justified and as such must be defended.

END.