

Minister denies cover-up in NW Health corruption allegations

Joe Phaahla, the Minister of Health, vehemently denies allegations of concealing purported corruption within the North West Provincial Department of Health.



Source: Facebook/South African Government. The minister of health, Joe Phaahla,

This is after *News24* reported last week that Phaahla suspended advocate Maile Ngake, who compiled an investigative report which found that the North West Health Department broke several laws when awarding 22 companies with security contracts in September 2019 to guard the province's health facilities and offices.

The publication said Ngake's report uncovered R1.2bn in tender fraud, supporting arguments that the minister was part of a "concerted corruption cover-up".

The department said it considers the publication's allegations "scurrilous, defamatory and devoid of any truth", since the investigation was compiled before the minister of health was appointed on 5 August 2021.

"As such, the minister has no knowledge of such a report and the happenings with regard to how the referred security tender was processed towards the appointment of the preferred bidder.

"It is wholly disingenuous for any person, including the said official, to attempt to link the minister to these allegations, as

they have no basis whatsoever.”

According to the department, the report was never presented to the minister when he took over the leadership of the department and could not have acted over something of which he was unaware.

Internal inquiry and resolution

“The minister did not respond to the allegations as requested by the journalist, as he was still inquiring internally about the existence of such a referred report, which couldn’t be traced until recently.

“The report was finally traced and was for the attention of the director-general, as all the administrative matters like this one fall within the scope of the accounting officer.



Pharma giants set SA vaccine price tag at \$734m, confidential contracts reveal

Katja Hamilton 5 Sep 2023



“For the record, the matter referred to in the article has since been dealt with by the North West Provincial Department in accordance with the court order, which reviewed and declared the awarding of the referred contract to be unlawful.”

The provincial department, according to the statement, has since assumed full responsibility for its programmes and activities after the termination of the Section 100 Administration.

“On the matter of suspension of the official, advocate TM Ngake, in the department, it should be borne in mind that in terms of the Senior Management Handbook, the responsibility to discipline employees in a government department lies with the director-general, who is the accounting officer.

“The minister of health, therefore, cannot suspend or take disciplinary action against an employee.

“Thus, the department categorically dismisses the allegation that advocate Ngake has been suspended by the minister of health or even that his precautionary suspension has anything to do with a report that he may have authored.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>