



health

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Deputy Minister Phaahla welcomes NHLS efforts to restore operations after cyber-attack

Pretoria: The Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla would like to announce that the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) operations have been fully restored following a cyber-attack in June this year which significantly disrupted the normal delivery of essential health services in the public health sector.

This follows a briefing by the Board and Executive Management to the Deputy Minister, who oversees the work of public health entities under the Department of Health, on the progress made to restore the systems following this unfortunate incident, together with plans to prevent and manage future unforeseen disruptions.

The NHLS is the backbone of the country's public health and manages a network laboratory system that serves over 85% of South Africa's population through 230 laboratories, playing a critical role in clinical outcomes and patient diagnosis.

Deputy Minister Phaahla thanks the NHLS on its swift and tireless efforts to restore its laboratories to full operating capacity following a successful and comprehensive rebuilding of its information technology systems and infrastructure because more than 70% of healthcare decisions are dependent on their services, thus restoring operations underscores its commitment to country's public healthcare.

Following the recent hacking incident, Dr Phaahla urged the entity to taking decisive steps to fortify its information systems against future threats and welcomes their commitment to investing in advanced cybersecurity technologies and implementing new protocols designed to enhance both the security and resilience of the NHLS digital infrastructure.

These improvements reflect its dedication to maintaining the highest standards of service delivery. It is strengthening its systems to ensure that any future challenge is met with minimal disruption to its essential operations, allowing it to continue providing critical health services to the country with confidence and integrity.

The Department will continue to support the NHLS and other public health entities to ensure they execute their mandates to effectively contribute to the public health system.

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