

Kwazulu-Natal Health MEC continues witch-hunt of doctors and breaks National Health Act

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- Nkonyeni continues witch-hunt against Mark Blaylock and Colin Pfaff
- National Health Act has been breached because Nkonyeni, her officials and the Kwazulu-Natal Treasury have:
 - Publicised private details of Dr Mark Blaylock's medical history.
 - Handed over original confidential patient records to a private company.
- Nkonyeni fails to honour agreement with civil society to resolve conflict.

Kwazulu-Natal Province (KZN) is the epicentre of the South African HIV epidemic. Nearly 40% of pregnant women attending public health facilities in the province are HIV-positive. 16.5% of people over the age of two are infected ([South African National HIV Survey, 2005](#)). More than any other province it needs good political leadership on AIDS. But instead the province's MEC for Health, Peggy Nkonyeni, entertains AIDS denialism and is destroying health-care in the province.

She is continuing her witch-hunt of Manguzi Hospital doctors, Dr Colin Pfaff and Dr Mark Blaylock. Pfaff introduced dual antiretroviral prophylaxis into the hospital. For saving the lives of children and improving the health of women, [Nkonyeni initiated disciplinary action against Pfaff](#) but later [withdrew it following civil society pressure](#).

Blaylock, in reaction to Nkonyeni's actions, including racist statements she made about rural doctors, put her wall-mounted photo in the dustbin. [Disciplinary action was taken against him](#).

On 21 May 2008 TAC met with the ANC's leadership in KwaZulu-Natal including newly elected ANC provincial chairperson Dr. Zwele Mkhize as well as Ms. Nkonyeni, who is now party treasurer for the province. At this discussion it was resolved that the Department of Health would convene a broad stakeholders meeting aimed at amicably resolving the dispute between the MEC and medical officers at Manguzi hospital. MEC Nkonyeni undertook to convene this meeting within two weeks and that representatives from the Department, TAC, the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society and the Rural Doctor's Association of South Africa would be invited. This meeting was never organised and attempts to follow-up with the MEC's office have been met with rebuff.

Instead, Nkonyeni has proceeded to escalate the conflict:

- Nkonyeni has called on Provincial Treasury to "probe the disposal of donor funding" given to Manguzi for the purposes of funding dual-regimen therapy for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). Ostensibly the Treasury audit is aimed at investigating allegations made by the MEC that private

donations made to Manguzi to support the hospital's highly successful dual-therapy PMTCT programme were raised outside of official authorised channels.

The KZN Treasury has hired private consultants, Ubunye Consortium, to carry out the investigation. [Here is the text of a letter confirming this.](#)

In carrying out the investigation, the private investigators have obtained original confidential patient records. This appears to be in breach of the National Health Act.

- New spurious charges against Dr Mark Blaylock have been trumped up and alleged against him. One of these charges relates to Blaylock's medical history. An official in the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Health gave some details of this to a journalist which became a newspaper report in the Witness.

Attempts were made by civil society following the meeting on 21 May to resolve this escalating conflict. They have all failed.

- [On 20 June 2008, TAC, the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society and the Rural Doctors Association of South Africa \(RUDASA\) sent this letter to Nkonyeni.](#)
- [On 25 June 2008, TAC sent a letter to the ANC asking for the situation to be resolved. We asked for an answer within 24 hours. We have still received none.](#)

After a press conference held yesterday by TAC, RUDASA and the South African Medical Association about Nkonyeni's actions, Nkonyeni phoned TAC's KZN provincial co-ordinator Phillip Mokoena and threatened to take legal action against TAC. She also sent an SMS to Mokoena stating: "if you decide to be economical with the truth, one day that will catch up with you. The truth always prevail!"

Despite being implicated in a corruption investigation herself, Nkonyeni has been elected treasurer of the ANC in Kwazulu-Natal. This is a tragedy. She epitomises the growing thuggery and moral decay within the ANC, the movement that led South Africa in the struggle against apartheid.

TAC is considering legal options to stop Nkonyeni's illegal actions. We call on the ANC and the Premier of Kwazulu-Natal to take action against her and to resolve the province's conflict with Manguzi Hospital.

- [AIDS Denialism](#)
- [Peggy Nkonyeni](#)

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