

**TO: All Media**

**ATT: News Editors, Health Reporters**

**For immediate release**

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**Provincialisation of Gauteng EMS to provide seamless and an equitable service across the Province**

Health MEC Dr Bandile Masuku has assured the Gauteng residents that the Provincialisation of emergency services is in the best interest of the healthcare users and in line with the prescript of the constitution.

Historically the Gauteng Emergency Medical Services (EMS) mode of operation has been different to the other eight (8) provinces of South Africa. EMS services in the other provinces are provincialised, all EMS functions are centralised, meaning that the EMS services in the province are the custodian of all the primary functions and competencies of emergency medical care.

Emergency Medical Services is pivotal for early awareness and access that informs swift response, treatment and transportation of emergency and non-emergency patients within the republic of South Africa and its borders. The agency model with the three Metropolitan Municipalities and 2 District Municipalities had recorded inefficiencies that can be resolved through provincialisation.

In Gauteng, the Department of Health has over the years subcontracted municipalities as agents to render Emergency Operations. The model has over the years proven to be ineffective and inefficient, and largely costly. In addition, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 108 of 1996. Schedule 4 reflects health services as a concurrent national and provincial competence thereby locating the EMS a provincial competency.

“In order to re-align the services, Gauteng provincial Exco took a decision to provincialise Emergency Medical Services in order; to gain operational efficiencies; provide a seamless an equitable service across the province with single command and control; with no municipal boundaries resulting inequitable access to EMS irrespective of geographic/municipal boundaries and to maximise the use of the available resources across the entire province”, explained MEC Masuku.

MEC Masuku further added that the Provincialisation of EMS has been reaffirmed by the Gauteng Executive Council and that the Department of Health was tasked with finalising all outstanding municipalities. The decision further ensured that Gauteng Province works towards achieving compliance with legislation, especially since it is the last province that is non-compliant.

“In following through with provincialisation of EMS, the process has been completed in the following municipalities; Sedibeng in 2012; West Rand in 2015, with City of Tshwane being completed in June 2018. The remaining metros, Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni are currently in the process of being provincialized”, added Dr Masuku.

“We have noted issue raised by some of our stakeholders and I would like to assured the Gauteng residents that the decision has been made to improve the quality of our services. There have been numerous engagements with various stakeholders including the City of Johannesburg officials on the provincialisation of EMS and there is no need for them to grandstand on the matter.

“We are committed to providing improved services to our people. Provincialisation will ensure a consolidation of current fragmented and duplicated services between province and local government, resulting in cost-effective, quality and seamless health services” concluded Masuku.

**ENDS**

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