

MEDIA STATEMENT

All Media

01 July 2020

Reports that health MEC Ramathuba has tested positive are false

Limpopo Department of Health dismisses the sensational article published by Sowetan claiming that MEC Dr Phophi Ramathuba has tested positive for COVID-19. The department wishes to put it on record that MEC Ramathuba is not COVID-19 positive. The article carries a bold headline which is not supported by any facts and the attributed quote does not in any way support the headline. We believe that this is dangerous journalism that is purely based on speculation while it is not supposed to be so. To us, issues of COVID-19 are extremely sensitive and journalists cannot be driven by the appetite to break stories even when they have no facts. We expect journalists to assist government in the fight against COVID-19 and that can only be achieved through reporting truthfully and factually.

The MEC encourages journalists to verify their facts with relevant authority before publishing a story. The MEC has never shy away from fielding any type of questions with journalists.

Testing positive of COVID 19 is not a train smash. People who tested positive for COVID 19 must not be treated as if they have committed an offense. All what they require is support from all of us so that they can recover. Reporting false news under lockdown regulations is still a criminal offense and in this regard it created unnecessary hype and anxiety amongst many people and impact negatively on the work that the MEC does on a daily base to try to save lives of the people of Limpopo.

We are disappointed that such a credible newspaper like Sowetan will publish such article without facts. We call upon the newspaper to correct this fake news.

End

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