

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **Community Service Doctors: PSA contemplates legal action to ensure placement**

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EMBARGO                                        None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing some 80 000 healthcare workers in the Public Service, is concerned about the lack of urgency by the Department of Health to place Community Service Doctors.

Compulsory community service of 12 months was introduced in South Africa in 1998 for health professionals, starting with medical practitioners. In view of the critical need amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and a severe shortage of medical professionals, it is unacceptable that the Department keeps delaying the placement of such Doctors. It is important that public facilities are adequately staffed and that the provision of trained staff across the country is adhered to. This will ensure efficient functioning and management of systems to meet the country's healthcare needs.

It is unfortunate that the Department of Health has, to date, failed to adhere to the compulsory placement of these Doctors, thus placing an additional burden on the health system. Excuses about inadequate funding as being the reason for not placing Doctors are absurd, as it is compulsory for these Doctors to do community service and contribute to the health system. This continued conduct by the Department of Health is to the detriment of these Doctors and the communities in need of their services.

The PSA calls on the Minister of Health to take decisive steps to ensure that these placements are done as a matter of urgency, failing which the PSA will consider legal action.

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