MEDIA RELEASE	**KZN Department of Health: PSA demands immediate lifting of moratorium on vacancies to avoid collapse of KZN Health system**
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is disturbed by the decision of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Health to place a moratorium on the filling of various clinical and administration support positions, including critical positions for doctors, nurses, wards clerks, and cleaners.

With more than 20 000 vacancies in the Department, the PSA requires prompt answers from the Head of the Department and the MEC for Health in KZN on how they intend to deliver quality health services to the community. It is highly irresponsible of the Department not to advertise and fill funded vacancies as this undermines the commitment of workers and places unnecessary pressure on the already stretched health system and human resources. There has been a moratorium on the filling of administrative and support staff since 2011, which has caused unnecessary instability in health facilities. The PSA calls upon the HOD and MEC to provide leadership and address this human resource planning crisis, which could result in the collapse of service delivery.

The PSA is further concerned about the incomplete review of the KZN Department of Health's organisational structure and posts establishment, which was due for review on 1 April 2021. This situation has a huge impact on the sourcing of human capacity for the provincial head office and health facilities. Some institutions operate on organisational and post establishment structures that are older than ten years.

The MEC for Health has been leading a progressive campaign of filling 60% of funded positions. This has been a positive initiative, but the implementation of a moratorium undermines the progress that has been made in the past two years. The PSA thus calls for a review of the moratorium to allow institutions to fill funded vacancies that arose owing to retirements. In addition, the *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* published by Statistics South Africa on 30 November 2021, shows that the official unemployment rate in KwaZulu-Natal increased to 36.8%. The PSA therefore appeals to the KZN Department of Health to fill its more than over 20 000 funded vacancies to combat unemployment and improve service delivery.

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