

MEDIA RELEASE PSA angered by deliberate discrimination against Community Health Workers without matric

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) was shocked to see correspondence from the Department of Health's acting Director-General, instructing provincial departments not to appoint Community Health Workers (CHWs) who have not completed Grade 12.

This correspondence was issued whilst this matter is still being discussed at the Public Health and Social Development Sectoral Bargaining Council, demonstrating a disregard of collective bargaining. In addition, the Department indicated that CHWs without matric can apply for other opportunities in the Department that do not require matric, whilst other CHWs are absorbed without interviews. The decision is unjust and illogical as it ignores the background of many previously disadvantaged persons who dedicated their lives to serving their communities. The same Department has trained and empowered these cohort of workers who are competent enough to fulfil the obligations of the post.

It is a shame that these employees are treated in an unfair manner where competence does not seem to matter. Some have even started by volunteering whilst they were receiving no income or receiving minimal stipends with no benefits, only to be discarded in this cruel manner.

The PSA calls on the Minister of Health to intervene and ensure that justice prevails. If the Department is unable to appoint these workers permanently in CHWs roles, the Department can absorb them in the same posts that it is advising them to apply for. The issue of academic qualification has been used as a barrier by the previous regime to close doors for previously disadvantaged groups. The situation cannot be perpetuated in the democratic dispensation.

END