

**MEDIA RELEASE**      PSA calls for responsible engagement on Community Health Workers' matter

**DATE**                      13 April 2026

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the conduct of certain organisations that are exploiting Community Health Workers (CHWs), particularly those without a matric qualification, to advance narrow political interests.

The PSA wishes to remind the public that trade unions exist to advance the rights and interests of workers through established collective bargaining structures. In this regard, the PSA recently issued communication to the Union's members and potential members, clearly outlining the Union's demand for the absorption of all CHWs, irrespective of whether they possess a matric qualification, into the public service. This position is firmly grounded in the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, CHWs were at the forefront of the national response, providing critical services under extremely difficult conditions. At no stage were formal qualifications used as a basis to determine their contribution or eligibility to serve. It is therefore inconsistent and unjust for the employer to now impose matric as a minimum requirement for continued employment or absorption. The PSA further noted with concern that CHWs have been placed on salary level 2, where it is not a standard requirement for employees to possess a matric qualification. This selective imposition of requirements is unfair and discriminatory when compared to other employees at the same level who are not subjected to similar criteria.

In light of these developments, the PSA calls on political parties and other stakeholders to refrain from opportunistic actions that may ultimately prejudice and mislead vulnerable workers. The PSA urges all parties to allow the established collective bargaining processes to take their course.

The PSA also cautions CHWs against being misled into paying money to people or legal representatives under the false promise of resolving this matter. The issue of CHW absorption has already been formally tabled at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council, which remains the appropriate and legitimate platform to address such matters. The PSA assures all affected workers that the Union is committed to securing a fair and just outcome. With the continued support and unity of workers, the PSA is confident that this matter will be resolved in their favour.

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