

MEDIA RELEASE                      PSA demands urgent plan for appointment of unemployed doctors in KwaZulu-Natal

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) remains gravely concerned regarding the failure by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health to fulfil its commitment to appoint unemployed doctors, as pledged by the Minister of Health.

These doctors were meant to be placed at different health facilities by 1 April 2024. Whilst strides have been made in other provinces such as the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal has yet to provide concrete plans for the placement of these doctors to address severe understaffing in health facilities. The effects of this failure are profound and alarming. KwaZulu-Natal hospitals and clinics are struggling with severe shortages of staff, particularly in vital positions. This directly compromises the quality of healthcare services to citizens and undermines the effectiveness of the National Health Insurance initiative.

The undeniable strain on the healthcare system caused by the shortage of doctors has led to increased overcrowding, longer waiting times for patients, treatment delays, and compromised care quality. Dedicated health staff, already labouring under limited resources, are being pushed to the limit, jeopardising both their well-being and the efficiency of healthcare services. Despite relentless efforts by the PSA, the Department and the Premier's Office in KwaZulu-Natal have remained unresponsive, failing to provide clarity or a tangible plan for addressing this pressing matter.

The PSA has urgently communicated concerns to both the MEC of Health and the Premier, demanding immediate action and transparency regarding their strategy for appointing unemployed doctors. The lack of communication and accountability from these authorities is unacceptable and exacerbates a dire situation in health facilities. The PSA is compelled to escalate these demands and implores the Public Protector and other progressive forces to exert pressure on government to prioritise the employment of doctors and rectify the staffing crisis in the health sector.

The PSA will not passively observe whilst KwaZulu-Natal's healthcare system flounders. The PSA demands swift action to fill all budgeted vacancies, particularly those for doctors, as stipulated by the Minister of Finance. Failure to urgently address this issue will force the PSA to consider other ways to enforce compliance.

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