

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes permanent appointment of Community Health Workers: Denounces discriminatory barriers
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the recent announcement by the Northern Cape Provincial Government regarding the permanent appointment of 595 Community Health Workers (CHWs).

This transition into the permanent establishment is a hard-won victory and a direct culmination of the PSA's relentless advocacy for the stabilisation of the healthcare workforce. The PSA has consistently been on record in pursuit of job security and professional dignity of contract employees who serve as primary link between government and the most vulnerable communities.

Whilst the PSA celebrates the security now granted to these workers, this milestone is a "bittersweet" achievement that highlights a glaring injustice in the Department of Health's recruitment framework. The PSA denounces the Department's decision to disqualify thousands of other dedicated Community Health Workers solely on the basis of not possessing a Grade-12 certificate. It is a staggering contradiction for the Premier and the MEC to celebrate the strengthening of healthcare service delivery whilst simultaneously discarding the people who have been at the core of that delivery for more than 15 years. These veteran workers have carried the provincial health system through multiple public-health crises, proving their competence, clinical intuition, and community trust under precarious contract conditions. To now implement a rigid academic requirement for an entry-level position that these workers have already mastered through many years of frontline service is illogical and an affront to their dignity.

The PSA further condemns the discriminatory nature of these appointments based on the age of workers. The PSA has observed a trend where senior, more experienced Community Health Workers are being marginalised in favour of younger applicants. This approach ignores the fundamental principle of recognition of prior learning. In a professional healthcare environment, 15 years of uninterrupted field experience should be regarded as a qualification far superior to a theoretical certificate. By enforcing these elitist barriers, the Department is effectively manufacturing a crisis of unemployment and stripping the Province of invaluable institutional knowledge and the deep-seated community relationships these veteran workers possess.

The PSA demands that the Minister of Health and the Northern Cape Provincial Government immediately cease the discriminatory exclusion of Community Health Workers without a Grade-12 qualification. The Union calls for a standardised, inclusive absorption process that treats all Community Health Workers with equality and the respect they have earned through their labour. The PSA will not accept a selective victory that deserts loyal, seasoned public servants.



The PSA is steadfast in the Union's mandate to ensure that every contract worker who has served the Northern Cape is afforded the dignity of a permanent post, regardless of academic background or age. The pursuit of an inclusive and fair healthcare establishment remains the PSA's primary objective.

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