MEDIA RELEASE **South African health system: PSA seriously concerned**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents more than 80 000 healthcare workers across the country, is gravely concerned about South Africa's health system.

Budget increases on their own will not resolve the dilapidated infrastructure of public hospitals and clinics. In addition, the cutting of the wage bill will impact negatively on the already huge shortage of health workers. Although government invested substantially in mitigating COVID-19 related risks, this input did not yield expected results in the broader health system. Statistics show that 265 000 more people died between March 2021 and November 2021 compared to deaths from natural causes in previous years. This is almost three times more that the official number of COVID-19 reported cases. These shocking statistics are a clear indication of the crisis in the health system that is in urgent need of an overhaul and a critical review of how it is managed.

It is furthermore noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had some unintended consequences and that access to routine health services was limited, with a knock-on effect on South African citizens.

The PSA calls on government to urgently develop a strategy to ensure adherence to the Constitutional obligations that guarantee the right to healthcare services. Budgetary constraints should not be a stumbling block in denying the South Africans of this Constitutional right. The PSA also urges the Minister of Health to develop a strategy in accommodating Community Healthcare Workers who are stakeholders in ensuring the successful implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme.

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