

08 February 2024

FROM: Solidarity Doctors' Network

TO: Minister of Health Joe Phaahla

"BY EMAIL"

The critical shortage of doctors in South Africa

Referring to the above matter, the Solidarity Doctors' Network is a voluntary professional network established by Solidarity and represents numerous health practitioners as members.

The Solidarity Doctors' Network received several complaints from our members regarding the critical shortage of doctors in South Africa. Considering that we have 10,3 times fewer doctors compared to 30 other countries, where the public relies on the government for healthcare services, this further contributes to the concerns raised.

It is a known fact, and acknowledged by the government, that we have doctors ready to render their services but due to budget cuts and freezing of positions



www.solidariteit.co.za

T: 012 644 4300 | C: 0861 25 24 23 | P: P.O. Box 11760, Centurion, 0046

C.o D.F Malan- and Eendrachtstreet, Kloofsig, Centurion

they are unable to provide much-needed services in the sector. According to the Health Review in March 2020, South Africa had 15 474 medical doctors in the public sector. There are currently 33,3 doctors per 100 000 of the population available in the public sector. This means the doctor-to-patient ratio is 0,3 doctors per 1 000 people of the population.

It remains the government's responsibility to address the failures and take corrective action to ensure quality patient care for all. The implementation and execution of plans remain poor and year-on-year we find ourselves in the same dilemma regarding placements and budget constraints. Doctors report feeling hopeless and frustrated with no assurance of employment for 2024. Lack of leadership, corruption, and no proper strategic plans contribute to the emigration of skilled doctors who could render their services in South Africa under different circumstances.

Based on the abovementioned, the Solidarity Doctors' Network is concerned with the inability of the government to absorb doctors and put quality care first. The lack of a clear strategy to retain doctors in the public service remains a significant concern. It is therefore important that the process of placement is prioritised as a matter of urgency. The placement and retention of skills are participative, transparent, and legally sound with the assistance of the private





SOLIDARITEIT
SOLIDARITY

sector and inputs by stakeholders. Budget constraints should be addressed, and facilities must be upgraded to retain doctors.

Yours sincerely,

Peirru Marx

Netwerkkooördineerder: Mediese Sektor

Network coordinator: Medical Sector

Tel: 012 644 4442/8

Faks/Fax: 011 388 9828

Sel/Cell: 0725285812

E-pos/Email: peirru@solidariteit.co.za



www.solidariteit.co.za

Page **3** of **3**

T: 012 644 4300 | C: 0861 25 24 23 | P: P.O. Box 11760, Centurion, 0046

C.o D.F Malan- and Eendrachtstreet, Kloofsig, Centurion