



SAMA MEDIA STATEMENT – RESPONSE TO THE 2023 BUDGET SPEECH

24 FEBRUARY 2023

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) is concerned that the Budget Speech presented by the Minister of Finance, Mr Enoch Godongwana on 22 February 2023 was focused primarily on bailing out ailing State Owned Enterprises (SOE's) with little attention being paid to basic services such as education and health services, thereby further eroding section 27 constitutional rights for all in the country. Regarding the health sector the following was pronounced:

- R23 billion will be allocated to health, to cover the shortfall in compensation budgets and to improve services, which include hiring new staff, retaining health workers appointed during the pandemic and clearing the backlog.
- Revenue division: These allocations minimally alleviate the financial pressures, in health, where the costs of providing services continue to increase.

SAMA expected some specific pronouncements on the following:

- **Safety and Security of medical professionals:** Investment into the safety of healthcare workers due to the rise of crimes targeting healthcare workers countrywide.
- **Compensation of medical professionals:** Though the budget includes the hiring of new staff and compensation adjustments, SAMA waits to see how that will translate into reimbursing of our public service doctors.
- **Load shedding impact and green energy proposals:** There are only 77 out of 400 hospitals that are exempted from loadshedding, and many clinics are not exempted at all. Coupled with cable theft in some hospitals, the public healthcare system is in a state of disaster when it comes to the provision of electricity. Our members are not able to practice where operations are delayed or postponed. Poor, and indigent patients that visit public health facilities are the most disadvantaged in this context. The Ministry has yet to present proposals to invest in renewable energy in the public health facilities, bar the Centre for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR) feasibility study that was started in 2022.
- **Infrastructure development of health facilities:** SAMA notes that the Limpopo approved project is welcomed, but it is only a drop in the ocean. There are many facilities that are on their knees because of lack of medical equipment, lack of maintenance of medical equipment and other infrastructure support systems.
- **Recruitment of Medical professionals:** SAMA welcomes the additional budget to retain staff that were brought in during the pandemic. However more needs to be done to address unemployed medical professionals and placement of interns, community service doctors and those doctors who have completed their community service.

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Notes to Editors

About SAMA: The South African Medical Association ("SAMA") was established in 1927 and became known as it is today through the unification of a variety of doctors' groups on 21 May 1998 that had represented a diversity of interests. SAMA is a non-statutory, professional association for public and private sector medical practitioners. SAMA is registered a non-profit company in terms of the Companies Act. SAMA is a voluntary membership association, existing to serve the best interests and needs of its members in any and all healthcare-related matters.

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