



# SAMA MEDIA STATEMENT

## **SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (SAMA) CONDEMNS DEPARTMENT'S DECISION ON COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND DEMANDS IMMEDIATE REVERSAL**

*Department fails to employ bursary holders - turning them away, forfeiting 6-year-long investment in training much needed doctors*

**12 February 2024**

The South African Medical Association (SAMA), the unwavering voice for medical practitioners across public and private sectors, vehemently condemns the recently issued Departmental Circular No. 34 of 2023 on Community Health Professionals.

SAMA has been alerted to the content of this ill-advised circular by alarmed members and affected individuals. Shockingly, the circular disregards established agreements for Community Service Health Professionals who, as bursary holders, are now instructed to gamble on uncertain job vacancies instead of being guaranteed employment by the Department as per their Bursary Contracts and the Social Compact.

This unilateral decision, made without consultation, is an affront to the critical shortage of doctors, leaving patients and communities in the Eastern Cape at even greater risk. The province cannot afford to squander the services of these dedicated healthcare professionals. SAMA is deeply disappointed by the lack of foresight exhibited in this decision and demands an immediate reversal. The Eastern Cape's already beleaguered health system cannot withstand the repercussions of losing these essential bursary holders.

In light of the foreseeable grave consequences, SAMA urges the Department to engage in urgent discussions with our representatives and Treasury. SAMA insists on exploring immediate solutions to rectify this misguided course of action. The decision to turn away committed bursary holders and other willing practitioners is not only detrimental to the Eastern Cape Health System but also callous to the lives dependent on its services.

SAMA stands resolute in its commitment to champion the rights of healthcare professionals and the welfare of the communities they serve. To view the circular, click [HERE](#).

(ENDS)

### **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 all healthcare-related matters.

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