

SAMA MEDIA STATEMENT



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Pretoria, 15 June 2024

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) urges President Cyril Ramaphosa during the appointment of the 7th administration of South Africa to consider the immediate downsizing of the current cabinet. This crucial step would facilitate the reallocation of funds to address the pressing needs within our healthcare system, ensuring better service delivery and improved health outcomes for all South Africans.

Our nation is facing significant health challenges, including a shortage of medical doctors, a healthcare infrastructure that is collapsing as well as insufficient medical supplies. These challenges are exacerbated by budget constraints that limit our capacity to respond effectively to the health needs of our population.

It is imperative to recognise that the health of our citizens underpins the social determinants of health, the overall well-being and economic stability of our country. There is compelling empirical evidence that every rand spent on healthcare especially in the first 1000 days of human life is in fact an investment. By reducing the size of the cabinet, substantial financial resources can be redirected to:

1. Improving Healthcare Infrastructure: Ensuring that hospitals and clinics are adequately equipped to handle patient loads and provide high-quality care.
2. Increasing Medical Personnel: Recruiting and retaining doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to meet the growing demand for medical services.
3. Enhancing Preventive Care: Investing in public health initiatives that prevent diseases and promote healthy lifestyles, reducing the long-term strain on our healthcare system.

SAMA believes that a leaner government structure will not only yield financial savings but also promote efficiency and accountability. A deputy minister's salary, for example, is about R2m per annum, excluding fringe benefits, personal staff members and VIP security detail costs. Reports have indicated that slashing the cabinet to 15 ministers can save country about R5bn which can fill about 4000 healthcare posts¹. The health sector, often regarded as the backbone of societal well-being, stands to benefit immensely from the additional funding. This move will demonstrate a strong commitment to the health and future of our nation.

We call upon the 7th administration to engage in a consultative process with all relevant stakeholders to explore the potential benefits of this strategic budget reallocation for the health of the nation.

¹ [Time for Ramaphosa to appoint a lean and effective Cabinet \(da.org.za\)](https://www.da.org.za)

(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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