# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1082**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 15 MAY 2017**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 16)**

**Adv A de W Alberts (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Health:†**

(1) Whether he has been informed of the situation where opportunities for placements for nursing students who are not bursars and who completed their degrees in nursing have been withdrawn and/or rejected by the South African Internship and Community Service Programme and that they are therefore prevented from starting their compulsory community service year, whereas opportunities for placements for students who are bursars have been accepted and their community service year started on 2 January 2017 already; if so,

(2) whether he can provide a full explanation as to why a distinction is made between nonbursar nursing students who completed their studies and those who paid for themselves when placements are made for community service; if not,

(3) whether he will investigate the specified practice; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

###### NW1415E

**REPLY:**

(1) During the 2016/17 cycle for community service placements, there was a challenge in placing all Professional Nurses eligible for community service as some provinces had incorrectly stated their available posts. This impacted both provincial bursary holders as well as privately funded graduates.

(2) In accordance with Public Service Regulations, all provincial departments are compelled to contractually obligate bursars to serve their respective departments for a stipulated period of time. Failure to redeem the bursary obligation results in the money having to be paid back by the bursar. Approximately 76% of all Professional Nurses who required a community service placement in 2016/17 had a contractual obligation to serve in a particular public health facility, district or province.

(3) The National Health Council has reviewed the matter in-depth and has requested provinces to urgently avail the posts required for the remaining group. The National Health Council resolved on 12 May 2017 that this process should be completed by 31 May 2017. I, in consultation with the provincial Members of the Executive, has written to each province to request a specific number of posts per province, to accommodate all the waitlisted individuals.

The National Department of Health has also been tasked to investigate how to improve post co-ordination and funding to avoid such challenges going forward.

END.