# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 135**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28 JUNE 2019**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 02)**

**Ms S Gwarube (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) Whether, with reference to the reply of the former Minister of Health to question 2989 on 19 November 2018, the co-operation agreement with the Republic of Cuba has been renewed; if so, what are the relevant details; if not,

(2) whether the Government intends to terminate the exchange of doctors between the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Cuba; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) what number of (a) students will attend Cuban universities for medical training in each of the next five years, (b) students will be sent from each province, (c) Cuban doctors will be sent to the Republic to assist in the public health sector and (d) Cuban doctors will be dispatched to each province;

(4) what (a) number of South African students on the programme did not complete their medical training since the inception of the programme of exchange, (b) were the reasons in each case and (c) steps were taken to recuperate any funds lost due to the incompletion of their studies?

###### NW1096E

**REPLY:**

1. Yes it has been renewed and signed 4 March 2019. The Agreement covers the following areas of co-operation:
2. Recruitment of Medical doctors and lecturers form Republic of Cuba;
3. Training of Medical students and postgraduates in the Republic of Cuba;
4. Exploration of possible areas of mutual interests in the fields of Biotechnology production and the development of pharmaceuticals and any other area of scientific research; and
5. Any other program or activity that may be mutually agreed upon between the Parties
6. No, the Government of the Republic of South Africa does not intend to terminate the exchange of doctors between the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Cuba. In accordance with the Agreement concluded and signed between the Government of the Republic of South African and the Republic of Cuba on 4 March 2019 in Havana, at the request of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, through its Ministry of Health, the Republic of Cuba shall assist in the recruitment of Cuban health professionals in identified categories.

The Cuban health professionals recruited under this Agreement will be recruited for the following purpose:

1. Providing health services to rural and other disadvantaged communities within areas where such services are inadequate;
2. Assisting the provision of health services in hospitals, clinics community health centres and other institutions throughout the provinces of the Republic of South Africa; and
3. Training and supporting local medical doctors, interns and students who work in such areas and institutions, on teaching programmes that the Parties agree upon.

(3) (a) Eighty (80) students depended on the availability of Provincial financial resources;

(b) Ten (10) students per eight (8) participating Provinces excluding the Western Cape. The only Province that will be sending students for the 2019/20 intake is the North West, 15 students;

(c) Provinces intend to recruit a total number of 112 Cuban doctors to the Republic to assist in the public health sector as identified by Provinces; and

(d) These Cuban doctors will be dispatched as per the following Provincial requests: Free State = 27; Limpopo = 37, Mpumalanga Province = 15; Northern Cape Province = 12 and North West Province = 21.

(4) (a) and (b) There are 326 students who have dropped out due to various reasons reflected in the table below

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Province** | **Medical** | **Misconduct** | **Academic** | **Voluntary** | **Deaths** | **Total** |
| **Eastern Cape** | 12 | 16 | 19 | 3 | 2 | **52** |
| **Free State** | 2 | 8 | 13 | 3 | 1 | **27** |
| **Gauteng** | 7 | 4 | 12 | 2 | 1 | **26** |
| **KwaZulu/Natal** | 12 | 7 | 31 | 11 | 4 | **65** |
| **Limpopo** | 4 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 0 | **17** |
| **Mpumalanga** | 2 | 19 | 5 | 7 | 3 | **36** |
| **Northern Cape** | 13 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 2 | **38** |
| **North West** | 18 | 6 | 29 | 7 | 5 | **65** |
| **Total** | **70** | **74** | **127** | **37** | **18** | **326** |

(c) The bursary contract is entered into between the student and the individual Provincial Health Department. The contract is standard across the country. When the student drops out each Province refers the student through writing to the Debt Collection office. Provinces have a difficulty in recouping the funds as these students are selected from the most disadvantaged families whose socio-economic status makes it impossible for repayment, unless the student might get a gainful employment.

END.