**1603. Mr V Zungula (ATM) to ask the Minister of Health:**

Following reports of a Congolese national arrested for practicing medicine without being registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), what (a) total number of persons have been caught practicing medicine without HPCSA registration and (b) steps has (i) he and (ii) his department taken to prevent unregistered doctors from practicing medicine and putting the lives of persons at risk? NW1732E

**REPLY:**

1. Section 17 of the Health Professions Act (Act no.56 of 1974) makes registration with the Council a prerequisite to practice any health professions registrable in terms of the Act and practicing while not registered amounts to a criminal offence.

According to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA/Council), 124 persons have been arrested for practicing medicine without registration with the HPCSA.

1. In 2014 Council established an Inspectorate Office as a compliance enforcement unit to enforce compliance through conducting inspections of the registered practitioners, suspected/erased practitioners, and to attend to complaints of illegal practice by unregistered persons (bogus practitioners). The office works closely with other regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies to protect the public against illegal practices by unregistered persons (bogus practitioners). The Council also conducts awareness campaigns to educate the members of the public on how to identify and report bogus practitioners.

In the public healthcare system, one of the requirements for employment is verification of registration with the Health Professions Council before a person can be employed as a doctor. This verification prevents an unregistered person from practicing in the public healthcare system.

In the private healthcare sector, medical schemes also have a verification system in place before doctors can be reimbursed for services rendered.

Unregistered persons evade these systems by working in the private sector where they either only accept cash payment or work in the practice of a registered doctor.