**1604. Mr V Zungula (ATM) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) Whether he convened a meeting for the purposes of synthesizing the task team report with the Executive Committee and provincial departments within 60 working days after the Public Protector’s report on allegations of undue delay by his department was issued to address the challenges experienced by Clinical Associates that was released on 30 November 2021; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) whether his department engaged with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to request that the matter of prescribing rights be finalised without further delay within 30 working days after the Public Protector’s report on Clinical Associates was issued; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) whether his department re-engaged with the Department of Public Service and Administration to motivate for the holistic review of the Occupational Specific Dispensation as a remuneration framework in the Public Health Sector that is inclusive of Clinical Associates within 60 working days after the Public Protector’s report on Clinical Associates was issued; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) whether his department will meet the deadline of 30 November 2023 to conduct and finalise the review of the Clinical Associates performance programme to assess various aspects of the programme, including uptake since its establishment, impact on health services, career pathing and/or advancement prospects of Clinical Associates, status of mid-level policy interventions generally and other parameters that may be of relevance to guide decisions on the programme; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1733E

**REPLY:**

1. The Clinical Associates matters raised in the Task Team report as well as the proposals for addressing some of the concerns raised in the report were presented to the National Health Council Technical Advisory Committee (NHC Tech) which is a forum that consist of the NDoH’s Executive Committee with Provincial Heads of Health Departments on 18 November 2021.

 NHC Tech accepted the proposal to undertake a comprehensive review of the Clinical Associates programme.

2. The Department engaged with the HPCSA on the matter of prescribing rights

for Clinical Associates and was appraised about the application made by the Council to the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) in terms of the provisions of Section 22A of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 1965 (Act 101 of 1965) to add Clinical Associates to the list of authorized prescribers.

3. The National Department of Health has held meeting(s) with the Department of Public Service and Administration to table issues pertaining to the conditions of service for the Clinical Associates as raised in the Public Protector’s report. The issue of Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) is being dealt with through a process lead by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). DPSA has commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to conduct a Personnel Expenditure Review (PER), that includes the review of OSDs in the public sector.

4. The Department has commenced with the process of conducting the review of the Clinical Associates programme performance. The Terms of Reference and data collection tools for the review have been drafted and a process is underway to get them approved. It is therefore envisaged that the review will have been conducted by 30 November 2023. However, finalization of the review and recommendations thereof will be subject to various approval processes of the Department that may extend beyond 30 November 2023

END.