

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**3389. Mr S Esau (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1)(a) How is the loss of scarce skills at 1 Military Hospital being addressed in terms of the Retention of Critical and Scarce Skills Strategy and (b) why is the appointment of medical doctors allegedly being delayed while there is a high vacancy rate at the hospital;

(2) has the occupational service dispensation (OSD) been fully implemented at the specified hospital; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) has the commuted overtime of medical professionals in the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) been aligned to that of the Department of Health; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) whether she has found that the (a) current status of OSD and commuted overtime have an impact on the loss of medical professionals in the SAMHS, (b) lack or unavailability of specialised medical equipment deter medical professionals from working in military hospitals and (c) centralised command structure responsible for the appointment of new medical doctors causes the long period of recruitment and deter the retention of critical skills? NW3782E

**REPLY:**

# Following the report of the Medical Task Team appointed by the Minister and the subsequent acceptance of all its recommendations, there has been much improvement in addressing the Human Resources challenges at the SAHMS

# (a) The loss of scarce skills at 1 Military Hospital are managed as a critical issue in the SAMHS. Bilateral meetings have taken place between the SAMHS and the Human Resource Division to ensure the appointment of healthcare practitioners, especially medical officers and specialists.

# Collaboration has taken place between the SAMHS and staff of the Human Resources Division to address processes and procedures. The agreements are being enforced and the initial delays in appointment of the capability had been successfully addressed.

# The occupational service dispensation (OSD) has been fully implemented at 1 Military Hospital in line with the prescripts of the Department of Public Service Administration after a comprehensive audit was performed on the personal files of all healthcare practitioners in the SAMHS.

# The commuted overtime of medical professionals in the SAMHS are aligned to that of the Department of Health.

# (a) It is argued that the current status of OSD and commuted overtime do not have an impact on the loss of medical professionals in the SAMHS as application of the OSD and commuted overtime are applied according to the prescripts and procedures that are followed for the National Department of Health.

# (b) The lack or unavailability of specialized medical equipment does impact on the recruitment and retention of medical professionals for utilisation in the military hospitals.

# (c) As was indicated in Question 3389 1 b the appointment process of medical doctors had been streamlined. Flexible arrangements had been agreed upon to facilitate and are enforced to ensure the speedy appointment of especially medical officers and specialists.