



THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Tel: +27 (0)12 481 2000 | Fax: +27 (0)12 481 2100 | www.samedical.org
Block F, Caslte Walk Office Park, Nossob Street, Erasmuskloof, Ext 3, Pretoria
PO Box 74789, Lynnwood Ridge, 0040

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The HPCSA
553 Vermeulen Street
Cnr. Hamilton and Vermeulen Street
Arcadia
Pretoria
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Dear Ms O'Reilly

RE: Training of interns in public hospitals

SAMA hereby wishes to raise a concern regarding the training of interns in public hospitals. We have been aware for some time, through the grievances of our members, that some of the public hospitals that are currently training interns do not meet the requirements to do so. This is a fairly long standing aberration that does not seem to be improving, therefore putting patient lives at risk.

A big concern for SAMA is the role of the HPCSA in this. The HPCSA is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the training hospitals meet the required standards, as well as ensure that it initiates the chain of events that will lead to disqualification of hospitals for intern intake if they do not comply. This has not happened in the past, which has served to compromise huge parts of our health system because of inadequately trained interns being allowed to practice medicine. We wish to stress that these interns are being compromised through no fault of their own. However this has the effect of setting them up for future malpractice and failure. Ultimately public health and patient safety get equally compromised.

This situation must not be allowed to continue and the HPCSA is the critical factor in this equation. SAMA wishes to urge the HPCSA to do whatever possible to resolve this problem. The law obligates the HPCSA to perform its duty of ensuring that these hospitals meet the necessary requirements. This is also the expectation of the public, which looks up to the HPCSA as the regulatory instrument vested with the power to protect their interests in this regard.

SAMA wishes therefore to ask that the HPCSA fulfils its mandate and address the aforementioned decisively and visibly, including the bold step of withdrawing the eligibility of non-compliant hospitals to take interns. We will welcome urgent engagement with the HPCSA and all other relevant stakeholders aimed at bringing an end to this current state of affairs. We look forward to assisting in any way possible in resolving this problem.

Yours sincerely
Dr Mzukisi Grootboom

Acting Chairman
South African Medical Association