

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA concerned about state of Health workers**

DATE 20 August 2021

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents more than 80 000 health workers in the Public Service, is extremely concerned that these workers are on the brink of physical and mental collapse. The continued strain of assisting vast numbers of critically ill patients since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in health workers no longer being able to cope.

The PSA is further extremely concerned about the absence of a plan in partnering with private institutions to assist with the vaccination roll out amidst a third wave of infections as well as a predicted fourth wave. The low number of South Africans who have been vaccinated to date is a clear indication that government on its own does not have the ability to ensure that mass immunity is achieved as soon as possible and alleviate pressure on the health system.

This situation places immense psychological and physical pressure on health workers, and they will not be able to continue without professional support. The critical and huge shortage of health workers adds to the pressure on these over-burdened workers. The PSA therefore calls on government to take immediate steps to ease the pressure by appointing more health workers.

The PSA, in addition, demands that government calls upon the private sector to assist with the vaccination roll out to reduce the burden on state facilities. The PSA, despite acknowledging the efforts required to assist citizens, stresses that health workers are not able to continue working unabated under undesirable working conditions. The toll on health workers is not debatable and the PSA calls on government to offer psychological support to these workers.

The PSA pays tribute to all health workers who continue to deliver their best service, despite the stressful work environment.

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