

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA encourages vaccination but not mandatory**

DATE 20 October 2021

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted media reports and the debates across the country on vaccination rights and whether to allow for children between the ages of 12 to 17 to have the choice on vaccination.

The PSA, representing more than 230 000 public sector employees, was established to defend the rights of workers and has taken an official stance to ensure that its members workplace rights are protected, as guaranteed in the Constitution. In a democratic country, until legislation is amended to reflect the choice of the majority, the PSA wants to ensure that its members know that their rights will continue to be protected. Vaccinations are currently a subject of intense debate and will likely become a matter to be subjected to legal scrutiny for the country to obtain legal certainty. Until that takes place, the PSA believes that no person should be coerced into being vaccinated. In the workplace there should be a fair balance between the rights of workers who are for vaccinations and those against.

Encouragement for vaccination should also not become a matter of coercion where persons are left with no choice, this includes coercion through public opinion. No one wants to suffer further owing to COVID-19 after the impact it has had on the economy and the right to earn a living. This is the responsibility of all, and the country must find common ground for all without having to resort to the protests and objections currently observed in other countries. South Africa, its Constitution and labour laws have always been unique to the circumstances of the country and that is how it should remain. South Africans have always managed to find solutions and middle ground to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of their views are accommodated and respected.

The PSA encourages the adult population to only advise and allow children to make a choice on whether to vaccinate or not. It is further a reality that there are many “child-headed families” who in their daily lives have to make medical-sound decisions without adult supervision. The PSA, however, encourages the country’s future leaders to make a sound decision to assist in returning the country to normality.

END

