



**MEDIA RELEASE:** PSA concerned about exodus of nurses to overseas countries for better work opportunities

**DATE:** 9 July 2024

**EMBARGO:** None

**ENQUIRIES:** communication@psa.co.za

---

The Public Servants Association (PSA) as a major South African union representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, is extremely concerned about the large-scale loss of nurses leaving the profession or emigrating to overseas countries in search of lucrative salaries.

Government should urgently invest in skills development and better salaries for nurses to foster the retention of nurses. The nursing profession is the health profession that is most accessible to communities. Nurses understand the complex nature of maintaining health and wellness.

There seems to be an increase in nurses leaving South Africa for jobs in Canada, Germany, and Ireland based on improved opportunities. The shortage of nurses across the world creates gaps in the health environment, with more attractive places across the world for nurses to work in. Nurses are forced to look for greener pastures owing to poor leadership in the nursing fraternity, poor and unsafe working conditions, in adequate uniforms, low salaries, as well as a lack of training and development opportunities. The South African Nursing Council has further failed to implement interventions to improve the capacity of nurses.

Whilst nurses played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic, government still fails to address their working conditions and salaries. The shortage of nurses has resulted in most nurses being fatigued and exhausted owing to the workload. It is disturbing that such a critical profession is neglected. Government must address the crisis in the health sector, especially in the nursing profession.

With almost 20 000 nurses being lost to foreign countries offering better opportunities, government needs to restore primary healthcare in South Africa, especially in view of the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme. Immediate interventions are required to retain nurses to avoid the exodus crisis and ensure continued service delivery to communities.

END

