

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA condemns Gauteng Department of Health's decision to cut 800 jobs at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital**

DATE 11 March 2022

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly condemns the decision by the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) to reduce staff at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital to the detriment of service delivery.

The Hospital is the biggest academic hospital in the southern hemisphere and produces the highest number of medical professionals in the country. Employees and community-service students are working tirelessly to serve the community with the highest level of professionalism. The Hospital further assists several neighbouring hospitals, including those from neighbouring provinces and even neighbouring countries.

Challenges arose with the influx of COVID-19 patients in 2020, including the transfer of patients from Charlotte Maxeke Hospital after parts of that Hospital were damaged in a fire in 2021. The GDoH has failed to replace any employee who left the service through natural attrition, resulting in a staff shortage at the Hospital. The PSA raised concerns regarding the appalling conditions that employees of the Hospital are experiencing owing to the staff shortages.

The GDoH employed more than 800 COVID-19 fixed-contract employees in addition to some 300 EPWP fixed-term employees from 2020 to 2021. The PSA and its members applauded this decision by the GDoH. However, at the beginning of 2022, the GDoH decided not to renew the employment contracts for all COVID-19 workers and EPWP employees. This will negatively affect the quality of the Hospital's service delivery to the community as permanent staff will not be able to cope with the high demand and the number of patients accessing healthcare services at the Hospital.

Employees of the Hospital are aggrieved by the non-renewal of employment contracts and have out of frustration started to picket. These employees assisted the GDOH, even buying food and water for patients out of their own pockets when the GDoH failed to provide these. The PSA urgently calls on the GDoH to permanently appoint these contract workers to prevent a collapse of service delivery by the Hospital at the expense of communities.

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