


CMSA

The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa

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MEDIA STATEMENTS, NEWS

CMSA statement on the impact of austerity measures undertaken by provincial departments of health on the specialist training platform in South Africa

February 16, 2026

Issued by Prof Eric Buch, CEO

The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) is the national examining body for medical and dental specialists in South Africa. It consists of 29 Colleges with more than 10 000 members. As a key role player in specialist training in South Africa, CMSA has noted troubling reports in the media and from its own members during the course of 2025 on the impact of austerity measures undertaken by some provincial departments of health on the medical specialist training platform. It is critical that the pipeline of medical specialists be maintained, and specialist posts be created and filled in the public sector to ensure access to specialist medicine for the vast majority of South Africa's population. Failing to do so risks quality of care within the public sector and will likely exacerbate the inequitable distribution of specialists between private and public sectors, and between provinces.

The 'freezing' or reduction of funded specialist posts in the public sector in South Africa has serious implications. In addition to increasing inequities within the South African health system, the reduction of job opportunities for specialists within the public sector increases the risk of emigration. It has been reported that Canada alone issued 350 temporary work permits to South African medical specialists between January 2020 and July 2024¹ and diminishing opportunities in the public sector are likely to accelerate the loss of South African-trained specialists to countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Of particular concern to CMSA is that training and supervision of registrars (specialist trainees) is likely to be affected by a reduction in funded specialist posts in the public sector with the remaining specialists having to balance the competing demands of increased teaching and service delivery responsibilities. A net reduction in medical specialists in the public sector results in an increase in service delivery

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CMSA calls on provincial governments to reconsider and reverse decisions taken to reduce funded specialist and registrar posts as well as address any other austerity measures that affect the specialist training platform. While CMSA acknowledges the resource constraints under which many provincial governments operate, the short term 'cost-saving' of austerity measures directed at specialist medicine will detrimentally impact access, quality of care, and equity within South Africa's health system. CMSA urges provincial governments to address the underlying reasons that necessitated the austerity measures including governance issues and the lack of accountability within some provincial departments of health that has seen billions of rands lost from South Africa's health system due to corruption and wasteful expenditure. CMSA through its Health Policy Subcommittee will shortly undertake a survey of heads of academic departments and divisions responsible for specialist training to evaluate the extent and impact of systemic challenges affecting the specialist training platform. CMSA plans to use this data to engage constructively with provincial departments of health to strengthen the specialist training platform and improve access to specialist medicine in South Africa.

¹ <https://businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/796461/hundreds-of-doctors-are-dumping-south-africa-and-its-just-the-tip-of-the-iceberg/>

² Wishnia J, Strugnell D, Smith A, Ranchod S. The Supply of and Need for Medical Specialists in South Africa. Cape Town: Percept; 2019.

³ Tiwari R, Chikte U, Chu KM. Estimating the specialist surgical workforce density in South Africa. Annals of Global Health. 2021; 87(1): 83.

MORE NEWS



NEWS

Honouring Mandela Day: Celebrating a community that chooses to serve

📅 18 July 2026

On Mandela Day, we are reminded that meaningful change is achieved through the collective efforts of people who are committed to serving something greater than

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NEWS

Celebrating Excellence: CMSA Admission Ceremonies 2025

📅 16 April 2026

As we move into the 2026 admission ceremony season, we take a moment to reflect on the 2025 CMSA Admission Ceremonies and to share with

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MEDIA STATEMENTS

SASOG–SASREG–COG(CMSA) Position Statement on the Endocrine Disruptors in Sanitary pads and pantyliners

📅 6 March 2026

The College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (CMSA), in line with our vision of promoting excellence in women's health and our mission to support evidence-based clinical

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NEWS

Interviews on JCMSA

📅 24 February 2026

The Journal of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (JCMSA) inclusion in PubMed Central marks a significant milestone for the journal and its contributors.

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NEWS

In Memoriam: Professor A.G. (Tony) Linegar – A tribute to a distinguished leader and teacher

📅 28 January 2026

We received the grave tidings of the passing of Prof. A.G. (Tony) Linegar on 22 January 2026 after a long illness. Prof. Linegar was President

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NEWS

CMSA amongst those to honour Professor Lizo Mazwai

📅 21 January 2026

The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) is pleased to highlight a public lecture hosted by Walter Sisulu University (WSU) on 18 November 2025,

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NEWS

CMSA mourns the passing of Prof YK Seedat

📅 15 January 2026

Yackoob Kassim (YK) Seedat, Emeritus Professor University of KwaZulu-Natal, passed away on 2 January 2026 at the age of 91 years. The Colleges of Medicine

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NEWS

JCMSA: Included in PubMed Central

📅 1 December 2025

Celebrating Milestones and Expanding Impact The Journal of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (JCMSA) has reached an exciting milestone: inclusion in PubMed Central

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NEWS

AI – Artificial or Actual Intelligence – Public Lecture in Honour of Prof Colin Lazarus – 16 September 2025

📅 11 September 2025

Speaker: Prof Samad Shaik, the President of the College of Paediatric Surgeons, CMSA You are invited to register for a Public Lecture in honour of

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NEWS

It takes a village action campaign against Teenage Pregnancy

📅 8 September 2025

The 23rd of August 2025 was a Watershed Moment, when the Advocates for Transformation (AFT), under the Leadership of the National Chairperson Advocate Myron Dewrance

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NEWS

The CMSA 70th Anniversary Conference 19–21 August 2025

📅 12 August 2025

THE NEXT 70 YEARS. Advancing the contribution of specialists. Understanding the challenges – learning from innovations – sharing knowledge and experience – growing collective solutions

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NEWS

Honouring Mandela Day: A Message of Gratitude and Purpose

📅 17 July 2025

On this Mandela Day, we reflect on the enduring legacy of Nelson Mandela—an icon of courage, compassion, and unwavering service to humanity. His values continue

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NEWS

The CMSA 70th Anniversary Webinar Celebration 21 July 2025

📅 15 July 2025

Join us to celebrate 70 years if the CMSA. This celebration will include reflections on our shared legacy, messages from key partners, and a look ahead

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NEWS

CMSA 70th Anniversary Conference: Call for Papers

📅 20 May 2025

Specialist medicine has a unique role in enhancing health and health care in Africa. However, many of the links in the specialist value chain in

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NEWS

70th Anniversary Kwazulu–Natal Provincial Seminars

📅 2 May 2025

Join us to celebrate 70 years of The CMSA and to discuss the challenges and explore solutions to delivering specialist medical care in Kwazulu-Natal on 8

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NEWS

183 New Eastern Cape Medical Specialists Admitted To The CMSA

📅 15 April 2025

The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) in partnership with Walter Sisulu University (WSU) will host the CMSA admission ceremony on 15 April 2025

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NEWS

Distinguished Surgeon Elected as CMSA President

📅 20 January 2025

Professor Modise Zach Koto takes office on 28 May 2025
Professor Modise Zach Koto has been elected as CMSA President for the 2025 – 2028

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NEWS

The Essentials of Scoping & Systematic Reviews

📅 20 January 2025

ICUDDR would like to invite you to a free webinar on conducting scoping and systematic reviews. It will be held on January 27, 8:00 AM US

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NEWS

National WBA Registrar Engagement Webinars

📅 12 December 2024

BACKGROUND
SACOMD and CMSA have agreed on the introduction of Workplace-Based Assessment (WBA) to enhance registrar training and to assess clinical competence. WBA will replace patient-based

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NEWS

Pholela Lecture 2024

📅 2 December 2024

Pholela Lecture 2024 was hosted by The College of Medicine of South Africa in Cape Town on 20 November 2024. The Pholela Lecture is the

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MEDIA STATEMENTS

CMSA Statement on the ASSAf Consensus Study Report ‘Achieving Good Governance and Management in the South African Health System’

📅 25 November 2024

The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) notes with concern ongoing media reports of service delivery failures and quality of care issues at public

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NEWS

Young Specialists’ Forum (YSF) Elections 2025 – 2028

📅 21 November 2024

Renewed Call for Nominations for the 2025 -2028 Young Specialists’ Forum
The CMSA recently embarked on the nomination process for the 2025 -2028 Triennium Elections

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NEWS

Mandela Day

📅 18 July 2024

Today we celebrate the legacy of South Africa’s greatest leader Nelson Mandela, who always acted with compassion and integrity in a global call for kindness,

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NEWS

CMSA launches Educational E-platform to support our candidates

📅 14 June 2024

CMSA launches Educational E-platform to support our candidates
It was with great excitement and pride that the CMSA launched its multidisciplinary educational resource E-platform yesterday.

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NEWS

Obituary of Prof BG Lindeque

📅 23 May 2024

It is with a profound sense of loss that we announce the passing of Professor BG Lindeque on 21 May 2024. The College of O&G

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NEWS

Tragic Loss of Zama Mkhize

📅 28 March 2024

It is with abject sorrow that we, the councilors of the College of Paediatricians and more broadly the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa, have

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NEWS

CMSA represented at the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

📅 27 March 2024

Prof Zozo Nene, President of the College of O&G at the CMSA, Head of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility unit at the University of Pretoria and Steve

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NEWS

Constituent College Officers and Councils Election Results for the 2023 – 2026 Triennium

📅 29 January 2024

The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA) recently underwent a successful election process for the Constituent College Councils and Senate for the 2023-2026 triennium.

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MEDIA STATEMENTS

Teenage pregnancy in South Africa: It’s everyone’s responsibility

📅 26 January 2024

The College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has noted with concern the media reports and the National Department of Health’s media statement, of teenagers giving birth

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NEWS

CMSA Launches Scientific Online Journal

📅 26 January 2024

In an exciting development, the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa, through a joint venture with AOSIS publishing and in collaboration with the South African

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