

MEMORANDUM OF DEMANDS

KZN DOCTORS UNEMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE 2026

REGARDING

**THE URGENT EMPLOYMENT OF UNEMPLOYED MEDICAL DOCTORS IN KWAZULU-NATAL
AND THE STRENGTHENING OF PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SERVICES**

ADDRESSED TO

The MEC for Health, KwaZulu-Natal
The Head of Department, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health
The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal

VENUE OF SUBMISSION

Natalia Building, Pietermaritzburg

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 17/06/26 *Pietermaritzburg*

"Healthcare is a right, not a privilege. Every unemployed doctor represents a missed opportunity to save lives."

MEMORANDUM

We write this memorandum with extremely heavy hearts, that despite the numerous attempts that we as the unemployed doctors in the KwaZulu-Natal province have made to bring government's attention to the ongoing crisis unemployment of doctors in the province, and the non-filling of vacant posts, our cry has fallen on deaf ears. The provincial department of health, the MEC of Health, and the Premier, have all not bothered to act on this matter, as if to them access to quality healthcare means nothing.

We are part of over 200 doctors who have been unemployed in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal since January 2026 with some of our colleagues from previous cohorts and suffering unemployment before this period. It is quite concerning that out of all the nine provinces, the province of KwaZulu-Natal remains the only province that has not done anything to address this issue. If anything, this signals that the leadership of KwaZulu-Natal is unbothered about the quality of healthcare provided to its own communities.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a doctor-to-patient ratio of 1:1000. South Africa has long surpassed this ratio. The doctor-to-patient ratio in KwaZulu-Natal is approximately 0.4 doctors per 1,000 patients. KwaZulu-Natal has a population of approximately 12 million people, the majority of whom seek medical treatment through the public healthcare system. Despite this, trained and qualified doctors remain unemployed, with no clear plan from the Department of Health to employ them. This is despite the KZN DoH having admitted in its report in 2024/2025 that staffing is an issue and that there is an existence of staff shortages.

This situation creates significant challenges within an already overburdened and overwhelmed healthcare system. Access to quality healthcare is a fundamental human right that should not be compromised. Patients are subjected to long waiting times at hospitals, doctors have to work extremely long hours, some which are not even compensated. Our leadership, cushioned by access to all luxuries that the world has to offer and easy access to private healthcare services, is not faced at all by the failures of the healthcare system. It is long past time for leadership to recognise that adequate staffing in healthcare facilities is not a peripheral concern; it is a foundational pillar upon which a resilient healthcare system is built, more so for a country that is in the process of implementing the National Health Insurance.

We have witnessed the regression of our healthcare system and now demand that these issues be addressed expeditiously.

Our demands are as follows:

1. We demand that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health advertise all the vacant medical officer positions at various public healthcare institutions within 14 days of receiving this memorandum.
2. A sustainable long-term plan to provide posts annually and address doctor unemployment beyond 2026 must be developed.
3. Priority consideration must be given to unemployed doctors who are from KwaZulu-Natal
4. Equal employment opportunities be provided to both bursary and non-bursary holders. We recognise that the DOH has contractual obligations with bursary holders, however, considering that majority of the unemployed doctors were trained by other funding schemes except that provided by the provincial department of health, it is just and fair that all unemployed doctors be provided an opportunity to apply and go through the selection process for each advertised post.
5. We demand decentralisation of the hiring process, allowing hospitals to manage recruitment independently, and for organised labour parties to be invited to observe during interviews.

We demand a response to the above within 3 days of delivering this memorandum. Failure to do so will result in an intensified protest action.

History leaves no blank slates.

KZN Doctors Unemployment Committee 2026

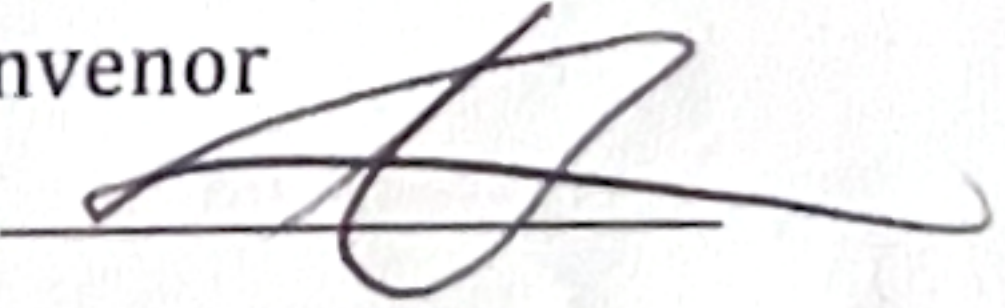
Dr T. Sibiya

Convenor

Signature: 

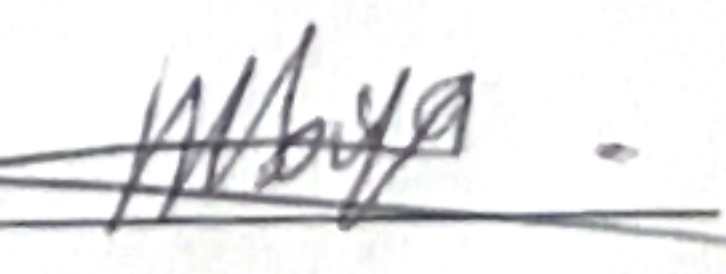
Dr C. Goba

Deputy Convenor

Signature: 

Dr S.L. Sibiya

Secretary

Signature: 

Received by

MEC of health KwaZulu Natal

Signature

MPHO ISOETEISI 17/6/2026

Witness

SAE Zondo

Number 1

Signature

LEMBETHE UM

Witness 2

Signature

Mthli ms Mtshali

W. KruHN
Hon. Premier
17/6/2026