



PRESS RELEASE

TITLE

SAMA AND SADA INITIATED MEETING WITH THE HPCSA YIELD POSITIVE OUTCOMES

GAUTENG – 31 March 2021

STATEMENT:

In response to the recently gazetted fee increases by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), the South African Medical Association (SAMA) along with its Special Interest Group – the Junior Doctors Association of South Africa (JUDASA) and The South African Dental Association (SADA) issued a strongly worded media statement. This strong response prompted the HPCSA to call a meeting with all stakeholders on the issue.

SAMA AND SADA INITIATED MEETING WITH THE HPCSA YIELD POSITIVE OUTCOMES

SAMA, JUDASA, and SADA were invited to the meeting along with the South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU) and The National Health Care Professionals Association (NHCPA) on the 30th March 2021.

During this meeting a number of issues were raised and discussed, including:

1. The new Medical and Dental Board (MDB) reported that they had initially accepted a 28% increase as determined by the previous MDB Board. However, the new MDB Board then convened a special meeting to review the budget and issues brought about by COVID-19. The meeting resolved to have an annual increase of 23%, which was subsequently further revised to 15%. We must point out that the HPCSA has 12 Professional Boards and only MDB increased their fees this year!
2. According to the HPCSA, the increases was largely attributed to the Professional Conduct Enquiries and related legal processes which the Council noted to be on the increase year on year.
3. The average fee increases of 15% per annum for each practitioner is unreasonable. SAMA and SADA, however, raised concerns about this increase specifically in relation to the negative impact of COVID-19, and the subsequent reductions in income by all practitioners across the country. There was no increase for public sector doctors and doctors in private practice are struggling to generate revenue. The HPCSA has not yet dealt with issues raised by the Ministerial Task Team, which in the associations' view is one amongst many factors which drives the high spending at the HPCSA.
4. One of the issues raised was that the fees were gazetted without taking into account the inputs provided by SAMA and SADA in their earlier engagements with the HPCSA on this matter.
5. We also raised the fact that in studying the budget presented, there is room for further savings which could be passed to members of the MDB.

SAMA and SADA are of the view that these substantial increases to the fees are not sustainable. Therefore, along with the other stakeholders present, agreed and or propose that:

1. An independent investigation into the Professional Conduct Enquiry fees and legal expenditure by the HPCSA be conducted, as this, as reported by the HPCSA, was the main cost driver impacting on fees increases year on year.
2. Urgent engagement with the National Department of Health (NDoH) be started.

3. Regulations that will allow for professional conduct enquiries to be done virtually to reduce all related costs.
4. Stakeholder engagements in the entire budgeting process before final fees are approved and gazetted by the HPCSA, is critical and must be implemented.
5. Discussions on the unbundling of the Medical Dental Board from the HPCSA be prioritised based on recommendations of the Ministerial Task Team report under the leadership of the late Prof. B. M. Mayosi and submissions that have been done by SAMA and SADA. The Council agreed to this noting that discussions will be held by the MDB in the next two months. Other stakeholders at the meeting were urged to also submit their inputs to this process.

In addition, SAMA, SADA and the other stakeholders encouraged the HPCSA to explore the possibility of amending the currently gazetted fees for 2021 downwards to address serious concerns raised by everyone at the meeting. For the first time, we got a sense that the HPCSA is willing to listen to its stakeholders and they have made a commitment towards finding a solution to address the issue of fees increases for 2021. The HPCSA noted that the necessary adjustments to 2021/22 gazetted fees could be credited to members in due course, should this process not be completed before the necessary cut off times.

In the meantime, however, it must be noted that the payment of annual fees is due on 31 May 2021. Practitioners are advised to use the online practitioner portal by creating an online account to make payment at <https://practitionersso.hpcsa.co.za/>

SAMA and SADA, whilst they are vehemently opposed to the 15% fee increase and would prefer a 0% increase, urge their members to keep in mind the relevant timelines, while we continue to engage the HPCSA on this matter.

SAMA and SADA are willing to take this fight on behalf of their members should they not receive a satisfactory resolution. It's a just and fair course and members must rest assured that we will do all in our powers to win it, yet responsibly.

Ends

Release date: 31st March 2021

About SADA:

The South African Dental Association (SADA) is the peak national body for the dental profession in South Africa representing the large majority of active registered dentists, both in the public and private sectors in South Africa. It is a non-profit professional association with voluntary membership organisation represented by a total of 11 branches, one in every province of the Republic of South Africa, with Gauteng and Eastern Cape provinces having two branches each. The Association represents the interests of both the oral health profession and its members in South Africa.

The Association is committed and engaged in processes relating to setting industry standards and formulating policies. Learn more about SADA at <https://www.sada.co.za>

Contact:

KC Makhubele, Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of The South African Dental Association

Dr RR Naidoo, SADA President

Dr R Putter, SADA Chairperson

Contact Details:

The South African Dental Association

Postal: Private Bag 1, Houghton, 2041, Gauteng, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)11 484 5288

Email: ceo@sada.co.za info@sada.co.za