



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOUTH AFRICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION (SADA) IS AGAINST THE SIGNING OF THE NHI BILL INTO LAW

Johannesburg, 14 May 2024

While The South African Dental Association (SADA) wholeheartedly support the noble goal of achieving universal health coverage, it is with deep regret that we express our opposition to the signing of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa. This decision, scheduled for the 15th of May 2024, is a step in a direction that we, as oral healthcare practitioners, cannot endorse.

KC Makhubele, the CEO of SADA, aptly describes the sentiment among our members: " We fear this is a disaster equivalent to Eskom to the power of 3 in the making! Our efforts to contribute to a more workable, and patient-centric healthcare system have been systematically disregarded throughout the legislative process. The current form of the NHI Bill, in our professional assessment, is not only impractical but also poses significant risks to the very healthcare landscape it seeks to improve."

The NHI Bill's disregard for the expertise and recommendations of healthcare professionals, despite extensive engagement throughout the parliamentary process, underscores fundamental flaws in the democratic process. SADA members have made submissions at every stage, dating back to the green paper release in 2011, yet our contributions have been overlooked.

As guardians of oral health and integral components of the healthcare system, we cannot stand by while legislation with such far-reaching implications is enacted without due consideration for its practicality and potential consequences. The NHI Bill, in its current form, not only threatens to reverse progress towards equitable, quality healthcare but also raises serious concerns about its impact on patient outcomes and practitioner livelihoods.

In light of these concerns, SADA is exploring all available avenues, including legal challenges, to address the shortcomings of the NHI Bill and advocate for policies that truly prioritize the needs of patients and healthcare providers alike. We call upon President Ramaphosa and relevant authorities to reconsider the bill in consultation with healthcare professionals and experts, ensuring alignment with the principles of universality, equity, and sustainability.

SADA remains steadfast in its commitment to engaging constructively with government stakeholders to develop comprehensive and effective healthcare policies that genuinely serve the best interests of all South Africans. Our mission is clear: to ensure the provision of quality oral healthcare and to safeguard the well-being of our nation's citizens.

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Note to Editors:**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 a 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>

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