
Media Release

EMERGENCY SERVICES – PROPOSED REVIEW OF TRAINING

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For immediate release

The **Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)** remains committed to the proposed review of emergency care training and education with the intention of halting the current short course Basic Ambulance Assistants (BAA's), Ambulance Emergency Assistants (AEA's) and Critical Care Assistants (CAA's) training.

This follows Friday's (4, June) ruling by the Pretoria High Court effectively dismissing an application by the Emergency Care Training Association (ECTA) to review or set aside the HPCSA's intended stoppage of short courses which have been submitted as draft regulations to the Minister of Health to be published for public comment.

The HPCSA is enforcing its mandate to protect the public through the proposed review of emergency care training by ensuring that in future persons entering the emergency care profession are sufficiently trained to safely use the drugs and skills in their scope of practice for a specific emergency situation.

"We are of the opinion that the current short course training duration and content is inadequate to meet the demands of the pre-hospital environment", Ms Marella O'Reilly, acting CEO and registrar said, "if you take into account that almost 80% of ambulance crews are made up of practitioners with three to four weeks' basic training, attending and transporting sometimes critically ill and injured patients, we have to ensure that the citizens of South Africa are in qualified and well trained hands in any emergency situation."

The HPCSA has a legislative responsibility to review and align education and training of the professions registered with it under the Health Professions Act, 1974 to ensure the registration of competent practitioners.

The HPCSA has since 2002 been engaging with various stakeholders to align the emergency care profession to that of other health professionals and the changes in the emergency care education and training model are necessary to meet the demanding requirements and challenges of this profession.

“A further concern for the HPCSA is the high level of registered BAA qualified practitioners who are unable to find employment in the labour market. Over 45 000 BAA’s are registered with the Council and this oversupply has contributed to the deregistration of 31 128 BAA’s and 1 030 AEA’s over the past five years for failing to pay their annual HPCSA registration fees”, Ms O’Reilly continued.

The aim is to give the industry professional status whereby either a two-year national certificate or a professional degree in emergency care will be required. The national certificate course, which will be offered by seven of the eight provincial colleges of emergency care and the South African Military Health Services, incorporates the current short course information.

Current registered emergency service personnel who choose not to study and obtain the new courses will remain on the register and be allowed to continue practising.

Draft regulations have been submitted to the Minister of Health to be published for public comment. Only after due consideration of the public participative process will these regulations be promulgated.

Ends

About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

The Health Professions Council of South Africa is a statutory body established in terms of the Health Professions Act no.56 of 1974 with a mandate to protect the public, all consumers of healthcare, and to provide guidance on educational, professional and ethical issues to its practitioners.

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