

MEDIA RELEASE



FOR ATTENTION : THE NEWS EDITOR
SUBJECT : SANC RESPONSE REGARDING TRAINING OF NURSE AND MIDWIFE SPECIALISTS, AND RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN TRAINED NURSES VS RED TAPE
DATE : 03 FEBRUARY 2023

The South African Nursing Council has noted the comments made in the media, e.g. by *Medbrief Africa* and *Business Day*, regarding training of Nurses in South Africa and specifically Nurse Specialists and Midwife Specialists. The SANC acknowledges the shortage of Nurse Specialists and Midwife Specialists as indicated in both *MedBrief Africa* and *Business Day's* articles and believe it is important to again explain the process around NEI and programme accreditation and the training of Nurses in South Africa.

The SANC is a statutory body currently functioning in terms of the Nursing Act (Act No 33 of 2005). It is responsible for developing and maintaining Nursing education and practice standards in the Republic of South of Africa. The Council of the SANC may accredit Nursing Education Institutions (NEIs) and Nursing programmes, **provided that the application(s) meets the SANC requirements, criteria and conditions as stipulated in the Regulations** Relating to Institutions as Nursing Education Institutions (Government Gazette No. R173 of 8 March 2013).

This is to ensure that the Nurses who qualified and qualify are **competent and safe practitioners**. The SANC issued a media Statement on 5 August 2022, with a thorough explanation of the factors that are considered when a decision to accredit the NEIs, Nursing programmes and student numbers by Council is made. The factors includes, **relevancy and adequacy of the resources** e.g. (physical, human, infrastructure, and budget) and consideration is given for students from other programmes or even from other NEIs, utilizing the facility. Therefore, it is not a matter of an NEI applying for a specific

number of students and the Council of SANC automatically accrediting such numbers, as it would be irresponsible to do that.

The comment made by Mediclinic`s Executive, Hendrica Ngoepe that *“the situation was exacerbated by most professional Nurses not having a postgraduate qualification, meaning they could not meet the criteria for a post basic specialist course”* would have to be clarified prior to response thereto.

The SANC would like to clarify several perceptions:

- The Regulations relating to the approval, and the minimum requirements for the education and training of a student leading to registration as a Nurse Specialist or a Midwife Specialist (Government Notice No. 635 of 5 June of 2020), were broadly consulted when it was published for comments by the National Department of Health before promulgation by the Minister. The issues of admission criteria and of Midwifery as a requirement to access the postgraduate diplomas in Nursing, was discussed at length by the Council of SANC. There were contrasting views about Midwifery as a requirement, but eventually the Council of SANC decision was that irrespective of the nature of clinical speciality, Nurses will manage a pregnant woman, women who have recently given birth and women in child-bearing stage. This is to address the country health needs.
- Ms Ngoepe is incorrect to indicate that Nurses have to work for at least a year in the specialised units before being able to register for postgraduate courses. In terms of the Education and Training guidelines for postgraduate diploma programmes, section 7.1.1.4, states that *“Experience in the area of specialisation is regarded as an **added advantage** for the candidates because it would not be possible for all the students who aspire to pursue post graduate Diploma to have the opportunity to have that experience, however Nursing Education Institutions may decide to include additional requirements such as experience in the area of specialization”*.
- Ms Ngoepe further makes unfounded statements by indicating that *“private Higher Education Institutions had yet to be accredited to offer bachelor programmes”*. The SANC can only accredit Nursing programmes that have been submitted and meet all the SANC criteria, requirements and standards. So far it is only one private NEI that has submitted a Bachelor of Nursing Programme, which was evaluated and feedback provided to the NEI in 2021. Ms Ngoepe is aware of the shortcomings of that programme.

- Ms Ngoepe regards the SANC as an obstacle for private Institutions to train more Nurses. This statement is unsubstantiated because the SANC uses the same criteria and standards for both public and private NEIs.
- Ms Toy Vermaak, Netcare Education Manager's comment indicating that the SANC has not provided rationale for restrictions on training of Nurse Specialists, is deliberately untrue. She is aware of the shortcomings of the submitted programmes e.g. where there is no lecturer with the relevant specialisation available and the SANC is expected to accredit such programmes. It would be reckless for the SANC's Council to do so.
- The SANC has engaged with the Hospital Association of South Africa (HASA) members on several occasions and listened to their challenges and agreed on the way forward. Their challenge regarding the registration of Nurses from India refers. The SANC has never registered a Nurse directly from India who has an additional qualification in any of the clinical and non-clinical Postgraduate Diplomas in Nursing. All Indian Nurses registered with the SANC are registered as General Nurses and/or Midwives (where applicable). In South Africa there are Registered Nurses with experience in all specialisations, but they are not classified as Nurse Specialists or Midwife Specialists. Therefore, the SANC cannot have different standards for Indian Nurses only. The updated Critical Skills list of 2022 covered in the Immigration Act (Act No. 13 of 2002) includes only specialised qualifications. The SANC is not responsible to grant permission to HASA to recruit Nurses. The SANC only processes the applications in line with the relevant legislation and policy documents. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was initially signed between the SANC and HASA has lapsed. One condition was that HASA members should train their own specialist Nurses.
- In terms of the Regulations relating to examinations of the South African Nursing Council (Government Notice No. R.7 of 8 January 1993 as amended), the Council may determine where the examination may be written. It needs to be noted that the Council has no accredited NEI in India. HASA members are allowed to conduct examination in India as a special concession due to judicial processes.

- The issue of articulation for Nurses who trained under legacy Nursing qualifications to Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework aligned Nursing qualifications is currently receiving attention from the SANC and CHE. The allegations that the SANC and CHE are not working together is maliciously misleading. Meetings are held regularly to discuss matters of mutual interest.
- The issue of migration of Nurses to other countries is an individual choice which may not be attributed to the SANC as failures.

Says Ms Jeanneth Nxumalo, SANC Acting Registrar and CEO: *"The SANC remains committed to ensure that competent Nurses are produced who will render quality and safe Nursing care to the population of South Africa and thus protecting the public in matters relating to Nursing services."*

ENDS

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 **Official Spokesperson and person to be quoted:** 2023-02-03

Ms Jeanneth Nxumalo
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