



MEDIA STATEMENT

Health regulatory bodies condemn looting and violence targeting health care facilities

Embargo: Immediate release

19 July 2021 – As South Africa’s statutory health regulatory bodies, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC), South African Nursing Council (SANC) and South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC) together with the National Department of Health, we condemn the ongoing looting and violence, especially those acts targeting healthcare facilities and the medicines supply chain. We appeal to citizens looting and destroying the healthcare infrastructure and disrupting the provision of health care to consider the long-term consequences of their actions on the health of communities.

In a time of a pandemic of huge proportions, such acts of violence, looting, and the disruption of service will simply fuel the fire. This is a time where medicines, including vaccines, and access to health care services are virtually obligatory. Without health care services, the requisite medicines and vaccines, we will have unnecessary deaths and cause further pandemonium, including severe damage to the economy.

As statutory health councils, in collaboration with the National Department of Health, are working closely to ensure that the provision of health care and essential medicines, including chronic medicines and vaccines, are restored.

We appeal to community, religious and political leaders to spread the word that these acts of criminality are not only harming the economy but are senseless and counterproductive. Targeting pharmacies, doctors’ practices, clinics and other health care institutions in the midst of a pandemic is detrimental, especially to the old, frail and vulnerable people.

The impact of the destruction on public health is already being felt in communities, with members of the community deprived of health care, chronic patients unable to access medicines, and COVID-19 vaccine sites and the vaccines themselves being lost to destruction and looting.

We further fear that the availability of controlled substances and medicines which have been looted or stolen in the affected communities may endanger the health of community members who may consume these without the supervision and guidance of health care professionals. We would like to urge the public to not utilise any medicines that are not accessed through authorised health care institutions. You may report such illegal activity to SAHPRA or to law enforcement agencies. SAHPRA may be contacted as follows:

mokgadi.fafudi@sahpra.org.za

We wish to reiterate that the health and prosperity of our nation, as well as the defeat of the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, can never be achieved through the destruction of livelihoods, the economy and the much-needed infrastructure. Therefore, let us preserve what is left of the gains in health and economic growth and immediately adopt non-violent means to conflict resolution.

Issued by:

1. Dr Boitumelo Semete-Makokotlela, South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA)
2. Mr Vincent Tlala, South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC)
3. Dr David Boikhutso Motau, Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)
4. Ms Sizeni Mchunu, South African Nursing Council (SANC)
5. Dr Sipiwe Mndaweni, Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC)

Media contacts:

<p>SAPC Mr Madimetja Mashishi Cell: 073 821 5994 Email: Madimetja.Mashishi@sapc.za.org</p>	<p>SAHPRA Mr Yuven Gounden Cell: 066 1202 669 E-mail: yuveng@sahpra.org.za</p>
<p>HPCSA Mr Christopher Tsatsawane Cell: 082 803 1600 Email: ChristopherT@hpcsa.co.za</p>	<p>OHSC Mr Ricardo Mahlakanya Cell: 066 473 8666 Email: rmahlakanya@ohsc.org.za</p>
<p>SANC Mrs Adri van Eeden Tel: 012 426 9542 E-mail: avaneeden@sanc.co.za</p>	