



## The plight of unemployed pharmacists and pharmacist's assistants

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Every year, it is becoming increasingly clear that securing employment for pharmacists and pharmacist's assistants will become more challenging. As more pharmacists are being trained, job opportunities will dwindle, largely due to factors such as government budget cuts and the ongoing economic downturn in our country. As the PSSA, we must facilitate a national dialogue on this critical issue. This conversation will allow us to better understand and analyse the challenges at hand, while generating innovative solutions to ensure that our colleagues can continue practicing their profession and receive fair compensation.

Currently, the PSSA is actively addressing the issue of pharmacist's assistants in the Eastern Cape who have not been integrated into the public health sector. We sought to be advised on the avenues explored to create sustainable employment for pharmacists' assistants. We also advocated for the recognition of the importance of the pharmacists' assistants' role in the healthcare system as this would assist in alleviating the strain on other healthcare providers and improve the efficiency and quality of patient care. We are hopeful for a progressive outcome.

For pharmacists who are currently unemployed, starting their own practices could be a promising opportunity to not only create self-employment, but it could also generate employment opportunities

for other pharmacists and pharmacist's assistants who are out of work. However, one of the main challenges in starting independent pharmacies is securing the necessary funding. This issue could be addressed through the proposed national dialogue, where potential solutions, such as improving access to funding or creating loan facilities tailored to support pharmacists can be explored.

There is so much that we are doing as pharmacists on a daily basis, and we all know the impact that we are making amongst the different communities in our country. There is need for ongoing emphasis on ensuring that pharmacists fully exercise their professional roles and document all interventions made during practice. We need to adopt an approach of documenting our activities as this will not only enhance transparency but also provide important evidence when engaging with funders on fee negotiations. It is therefore necessary that we commit to these efforts to advance our profession. I salute you all and urge you to continue serving the communities and the country at large.

Lastly, I would like to wish you all a good and imperative safe festive season with your families and friends and to those who will be travelling, I wish you safe travels until we meet again in the new year.

I thank you all.