

South African Committee of Health Sciences Deans
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Marije Versteeg
Project Manager
Rural Health Advocacy Project

15 July 2011

Dear Marije

South African Guidelines on Rural Recruitment and Retention

The South African Committee of Health Sciences Deans (SACOHSD) discussed this document at its meeting of 12 July. The SACOHSD:

- Strongly commended and unequivocally supported the document.
- Recommended that the document be strengthened in the context of inclusivity and multi-disciplinarity because the disease burden necessitates the full gamut of healthcare professionals including mid-level workers (MLWs), working together toward shared health outcomes.
- Suggested that innovative public-private partnerships be explored in increasing the graduate outputs currently constrained by infrastructural and human resources within Universities and the public health clinical training platform.
- Supported the acceleration of MLW training on the explicit proviso of the creation of posts and assurance of career mobility especially within the public sector.
- Recommended that research into rural recruitment and retention occur in tandem with immediate interventions.
- Recommended that the section on who may work in the South African public service (5.2) be contextualized in terms of the WHO Code of Practice on the international recruitment of healthcare workers
- Recommended that staffing norms be ascertained for all healthcare professionals taking due cognizance of the disease burden and in the context of affordability
- Recommended the review of the scopes of practice of existing and new cadres of healthcare workers in the context of the disease burden, primary healthcare, national health insurance and task shifting as opposed to geographical needs.

Professor SY Essack
Chair
UKZN

Professor G Perez
Deputy Chair
UCT

Professor Gihwala
Treasurer
CPUT

Vacant
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The SACOHSD further endorsed:

- That the training of healthcare professionals is the joint responsibility of the Departments of Health and Higher Education and Training.
- Outreach and recommended the formulation of a formal policy and implementation framework/guideline with the District Health System as a point of departure.
- The marketing strategy and consultation with existing rural healthcare workers as important stakeholders.
- The need for strong human resources expertise.
- The use of community service as originally intended, i.e., equitable access to the full range of health services in under-resourced particularly rural areas with a comprehensive ongoing induction and orientation programme for community service healthcare professionals.
- Increasing support to the nursing profession (5.3) together with the resolutions taken at the recent Nursing Summit.
- Optimization of recruitment processes without compromising the competency evaluations.
- Rural recruitment and expanding the clinical training platform to include rotations/blocks in rural areas with the imminent allocation of the Health Professional Training and Development Grant to Universities proving the ideal opportunity to renegotiate Joint Health Agreements and the clinical training platform.

SACOHSD members were requested to circulate the document to national HoD For a, professional organizations/associations and other stakeholders to obtain the widest and most comprehensive input.

I trust that you will find this input useful.

Yours sincerely



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