



# NEHAWU HEADS TO COURT IN DEFENCE OF COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE WORKERS

## MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday October 24, 2024

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] will be appearing at the Labour Court in Defence of Community Healthcare Workers on the 29th October 2024, in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. at 10:00.

This comes against the background of our determination to intensify the fight for the permanent appointment of Community Healthcare Workers. In this regard, the union filed a case in the Labour Court to review the Arbitration Award that ruled against our application to force the employer to appoint Community Healthcare Workers permanently. As NEHAWU, we are of the view that the National Department of Health failed to demonstrate justifiable reasons why Community Health Workers are kept in recurring fixed-term contracts.

Community Healthcare Workers play a tremendous role in providing healthcare to communities. They contribute significantly in improving the health status of our people. Indeed, this contingent of healthcare workers have on many occasions proven to be the backbone of the healthcare system and the important role they play in promoting health and wellbeing of our people. It was Community Healthcare Workers at the peak of COVID-19 that risked their lives in the fight against the pandemic. They played an instrumental role in the contact tracing and screening.

As NEHAWU, we reiterate our view that more has to be done to rapidly address the vast shortages of personnel in the healthcare system, as underscored in the 2030 Human Resource for Health Strategy where it states that "the prevailing Human Resource for Health challenges are a result of continued underinvestment, limited strategic planning and management capacity, and gaps in governance, stewardship, accountability, coordination and implementation of key health workforce policy interventions for the delivery of quality services".

It is imperative for the department to ensure that there's an investment in the healthcare system through the permanent employment of Community Healthcare Workers to address the major challenges encountering our healthcare system. Community Healthcare Workers play a critical role in improving the quality of our healthcare services. This would contribute positively towards strengthening our healthcare system to ensure that it provides access to quality health services for all in line with the principles of universal health coverage.

We are more than prepared to intensify the fight for the permanent absorption of all Community Health Workers with full employment benefits that are enjoyed by other public servants. Community Healthcare Workers can rest assured that they have a fighting union on their side. We will continue to wage a relentless war to protect the interest of all Community Health Workers.

The national union reiterates its call for the permanent employment of Community Healthcare Workers. Members of the media are invited to cover the picket.

END

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