

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMITTEES OF HEALTH SCIENCES DEANS

4 December 2023

MEDIA STATEMENT

The impact on our students of ongoing challenges with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

The South African Committees of Dental Deans (SACODD), Healthcare Sciences Deans (SACOHSD) and Medical Deans (SACOMD) are associations of the country's Deans formed to facilitate the collective interaction of the Deans with other stakeholders in the country on academic matters related to health sciences education, research, and the health system.

Recent developments in our country on student funding and the challenges associated with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the implementation and management of stable, consistent monthly payments to Health Sciences students and all students at large, has brought into sharp focus the challenges facing the students in South Africa. The Deans are deeply concerned about the impact the NSFAS challenges have on our students, particularly during the very critical stage in their academic calendar at this time of the year.

We call on all stakeholders to urgently resolve the situation for all students to allow students to focus on their academic activities. It is the responsibility of the NSFAS to provide an immediate, socially sustainable environment for our students and not worsen the situation described as a "no food and living allowance crisis".

The Deans have grave concerns about the future of academic sustainability of student life due to a malfunctioning funding system.

We recognise the efforts of senior stakeholders to resolve the matter. The Deans are calling on Government to take urgent and drastic steps to address the systemic student funding aid failures as a matter of priority and urge all involved to find a sustainable long-term funding solution as a matter of utmost urgency.

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