

# HPCSA welcomes SIU investigation

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has welcomed the proclamation by President Cyril Ramaphosa on the Special Investigative Unit's (SIU) investigation into alleged unlawful or improper conduct by employees of the HPCSA.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

This follows a report by the Ministerial Task Team (MTT) appointed by Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi in 2015, to investigate allegations of administrative irregularities, mismanagement and poor governance at the HPCSA.

The MTT report of the investigations, which was released by Motsoaledi in October 2015, found the HPCSA to be in a state of multi-system organisational dysfunction, which resulted in the failure of the organisation to deliver effectively and efficiently on its primary objects and functions, in terms of the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974.

“There is lack of coherence and cohesion ... it is the view of the MTT that the best interests of the health system are not served by the current structure and organisation of the HPCSA,” the minister reported at the time.

The HPCSA was also accused of poor communication with health professionals, excessive delays in processing applications, registration rules that discriminate against foreign-qualified practitioners from developing countries, and failure to respond meaningfully to questions from the public.

## Business Process Re-engineering Project

HPCSA CEO, Dr Raymond Billa, said that based on the MTT outcome report, the council has embarked on a Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) Project.

“The BPR project is aimed at enhancing council’s effectiveness and efficiencies through streamlined services that will ensure that it becomes a reputable, professional regulatory body. It is estimated that council will reap the rewards of the investment made on the turnaround over a five-year period. However, over the past two years, the HPCSA has made remarkable strides in ensuring that it achieves the goals and objectives of the BPR Project,” Billa said.

The MTT report highlighted a need for full organisational review which would be inclusive of a new governance and administrative structure.

He said the revised organisational structure aims to consolidate HPCSA’s structure into five high-level functional areas, including, enabling development of specific functional knowledge and expertise within each function, clear accountability enabling identification of inefficiencies, better departmental coordination and a stable environment, and faster decision making.

The new organisational structure became effective in August 2018.

“On 24 August 2018, the HPCSA, in line with its determination to turn council around into a transparent and credible regulator, submitted a request to the SIU to investigate any conduct of maladministration, corruption or corrupt activities, including fraud, in connection with the mandate of the council as contained in the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974, against any person,” Billa said.

This included amongst others, registration of persons in terms of the Act (including the integrity of all registers kept in terms of the act) and provision or offering of education and training having as its object to qualify any person for the practising of any profession to which the provisions of the Act apply.

The SIU is currently undertaking its own internal processes in this regard, Billa said.

He added that an Anti-Corruption Forum on Health was also established to deal with all allegations of maladministration within the health sector.

He re-assured the public of the council’s commitment to eradicate corruption.

“Council believes that with the turnaround outcomes being bedded down and the registrar/CEO at the helm, the image of the HPCSA can only improve in the mid to long term. Council understands that the turnaround journey is not going to be an easy one, however, with the initial steps already taken, the HPCSA can only get better,” Billa said.

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