

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**JUNE 15, 2022**

We learnt with great relief of the lifting of the unwarranted suspension of Dr Tim de Maayer, a clinician at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital, who wrote an open letter detailing how the astonishingly poor provisioning and administration by the Gauteng Dept of Health has been the proximate cause of deaths and disability of children at the facility.

Given that Dr de Maayer is one of fewer than ten specialists in his field of paediatric gastroenterology in the country and that his suspension created an unacceptable risk to patients under his care, we were gratified to hear of his re-instatement.

**It is, therefore, astonishing to hear reports that Dr de Maayer, despite his reinstatement, is still being subjected to a disciplinary process by the same officials who had so unwisely crafted his suspension. He and colleagues were informed that he will be served with a warning letter, an important step towards what we expect will be his eventual dismissal.**

Not content with this further punitive action, Dr de Maayer was allegedly also forced to apologise to the CEO of the facility who signed his letter of suspension, reportedly because he had sent a brief text to colleagues and others thanking them for their support during his ordeal and which, accordingly, will now be used against him because he did not follow explicit orders to remain completely mute.

We call on the Gauteng provincial government to initiate an urgent enquiry into this egregious administrative act as well as into the conduct, especially, of the CEO, who has reportedly exhibited tendentious behaviour on previous occasions both in her role at Rahima Moosa Hospital and at other facilities, where she failed to respond to the legitimate concerns of clinicians and now appears intent on conducting a vindictive campaign against Dr de Maayer, with the support of the Gauteng Dept of Health.

The enquiry must, at the least, determine the following:

- I. The reasons why the re-instatement of the whistle-blower is not unconditional.
- II. Whether the conduct of the CEO and others, who ignored all the communication sent through the correct channels before Dr de Maayer went public, is legitimate.
- III. Under whose authority and with whose support the CEO suspended Dr de Maayer and whether she is fit for continued appointment at a tertiary health facility.
- IV. Whether the administrative regime of the Gauteng Dept of Health is compatible with the ethical framework of a health system in a democracy.

Our public health facilities must be havens of care for the people, not personal fiefdoms of bureaucrats with an axe to grind. We stand with Dr de Maayer and other healthcare professionals who are subjected to the wilful menace of petty officialdom.