



Press Statement:

Suspension of Dr Tim de Maayer by the Gauteng Department of Health

The decision of the Gauteng Department of Health to place Dr Tim de Maayer on precautionary suspension for publicly exposing the rot in the management of the Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital and its effects, including the death of patients, plumbs new depths for a department very well known for serial disasters.

This shameless application of disciplinary rules is a vengeful bureaucratic act following Dr de Maayer's unsparing expose of the needless loss of life in a major facility in the most industrialised city on the continent. It is a sure indictment of the Dept of Health and is a manifestation of the ruin to which it has rendered many parts of the public health service.

Dr de Maayer has been suspended on grounds that he has a voice, a conscience, a professional ethic and for being a committed public health clinician. This pattern of victimisation has been repeatedly applied to clinicians who dare call out the inadequacies of the administration and its negative impact on clinicians and on the lives of patients.

As things stand, Dr de Maayer's suspension has left his many ill patients having to be allocated to his overburdened colleagues. As the only paediatric gastroenterologist at Rahima Moosa Hospital, his unit is now effectively shut, creating an immediate risk to numerous patients there.

This latest irrational and highly damaging conduct by the Gauteng Department of Health is a reprise of the many unmitigated fiascos that have characterised it over the years and is an affront to every healthcare worker who works under the burden of the current administration. It is an abiding irony that a democratic government still utilises public sector rules that stifled any dissent in the Apartheid era.

This cynical act by the petty bureaucracy must be repudiated by every healthcare worker worthy of that title. There is an urgent need for them to stand united and speak fearlessly on matters that have harmful effects on patients.

We call on the Premier of the province to immediately act to reverse Dr de Maayer's preposterous suspension and to instead suspend the officials who have conspired on this matter, pending an investigation into this unbecoming conduct and the regressive administrative regime that allows it to occur.

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Progressive Health Forum

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