

Nursing crisis in South Africa

'SA's pipeline for training specialist nurses throttled'

“According to SA Nursing Council (SANC) data, universities and public nursing colleges have been given the go-ahead to train only 70 nurses seeking postgraduate qualifications in emergency care this year, 80 for oncology, fewer than 200 for critical care, and just 265 for midwifery,” reported ***Business Day*** (16 January 2023).

“Citing data from a report commissioned by the Health Department from the Hospital Association of SA and McKinsey, Wits professor of nursing Judith Bruce said there is a shortage of up to 62 000 nurses in all categories, and 50% of these shortages are in the professional nursing category.

“The situation is so grave that the government has sought to bolster numbers by including specialist nurses on its scarce skills list.”

*The government’s decision to introduce new qualifications in 2020 meant nursing education institutions had to acquire new accreditation from multiple bodies: The Department of Higher Education & Training, the Council for Higher Education, the SA Qualifications Authority and the SANC before they could begin training specialist nurses on the new curriculum. But red tape stymied their plans to such an extent that no new students could begin specialist nursing training in 2020 and 2022.”

More nurses needed to avoid catastrophe

In SA, there is just one nurse per 213 people. Of these, less than a third are under 40; within 15 years, 47% of all nurses will have retired – ***Business Day*** (12 April 2023):

“If action is not taken immediately to develop a sustainable pipeline of nursing talent, the problem will become noticeably worse. As a leading provider of quality healthcare, we have the facilities and the capacity to contribute to the national pool of skills, especially in the field of nursing, by training as many as 3 000 more nurses every year. Yet we are being denied the opportunity to invest in the next generation of nurses. The bureaucrats will not listen.”

To read Peter Wharton-Hood’s article

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2023-04-12-peter-wharton-hood-sa-needs-to-invest-in-nurses-to-avoid-a-healthcare-catastrophe/>

Gauteng nursing students left in the lurch

Business Day reported o 23 May that more than 100 nursing students with bursaries from the Gauteng health department are in limbo as the department does not have funds to place them for community service and absorb them for employment.

The students from the Gauteng College of Nursing began their studies in 2020 and were

given bursaries by the department. According to the department it does not have the R77-m to cover the costs of extending the period of the current bursary contract.