



# KwaZulu-Natal Doctors Healthcare Coalition

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## KZNDHC Supports IPAF's Application to Set Aside Board Notice 101 of 2022

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### KZNDHC Supports IPAF's Application to Set Aside Board Notice 101 of 2022

Durban, 30 May 2023 - The South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC) and the Independent Practitioners Association Foundation (IPAF) recently appeared in court on Tuesday, 23 May 2023, regarding IPAF's application to set aside Board Notice 101 of 2022. Following the presentation of arguments from both parties, the court has reserved judgment on the matter until a later stage. In accordance with the norms and standards of the South African Judiciary, judgments are expected to be handed down within three (3) months after the last hearing. Consequently, the implementation of PIMART remains suspended pending the final judgment of the court.

KZNDHC stands firmly behind IPAF's application and has made submissions supporting their cause. We believe that it is essential to critically evaluate the potential impact of expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists to include HIV treatment and management.

The provision of healthcare services is a multifaceted field that demands specialized expertise and extensive training. Historically, pharmacists have played a crucial role in medication dispensing and counselling. However, recent discussions have arisen regarding their potential inclusion in HIV treatment and management, raising concerns about patient safety and overall healthcare effectiveness.

Several considerations must be carefully evaluated when contemplating this expansion:

Directors : Prof. MN Chetty (Chairman), Dr P. Ramlachan (Deputy Chairperson),  
Dr N. Govender (CEO), Dr DGH Bobat (Financial Director), Dr JD Patel (Company Secretary)  
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1. **Lack of Specialized Training:** HIV treatment and management involve complex medical protocols, including antiretroviral therapy (ART), monitoring viral load and CD4 counts, and managing drug interactions and side effects. Doctors receive extensive training in HIV medicine to ensure they possess the necessary expertise for comprehensive care. Expanding pharmacists' responsibilities without adequate HIV-specific training could compromise patient safety.
2. **Comprehensive Patient Assessment:** Successful HIV treatment and management require a comprehensive understanding of a patient's medical history, co-existing conditions, and potential drug interactions. Doctors possess the expertise to conduct thorough assessments and tailor treatment plans accordingly. Pharmacists may lack the necessary background knowledge and clinical experience to perform these assessments adequately, potentially leading to suboptimal treatment decisions.
3. **Continuity and Coordination of Care:** HIV care often involves ongoing monitoring, regular follow-up visits, and adjustments to treatment regimens based on patient response and viral load. Doctors provide continuity of care, ensuring appropriate follow-up, adherence counselling, and addressing potential complications. Expanding the role of pharmacists in HIV treatment will disrupt this continuity, compromising patient outcomes.
4. **Recognition of Comorbidities and Complex Cases:** HIV frequently coexists with other medical conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental health disorders, and substance abuse. Managing these comorbidities requires specialized knowledge and tailored treatment approaches. Doctors are trained to recognize and manage complex cases, considering the interplay of multiple conditions. Pharmacists, while essential in managing medication interactions, may not possess the comprehensive medical training necessary to adequately address these complex cases, potentially compromising patient health.
5. **Ethical and Legal Considerations:** Expanding the scope of practice for pharmacists in HIV treatment raises ethical and legal concerns. Prescribing medication and making treatment decisions require careful consideration of individual patient factors, potential risks, and benefits. Doctors are trained to uphold ethical principles, ensuring patient autonomy,

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beneficence, and non-maleficence. Expanding the responsibilities of pharmacists without appropriate safeguards and oversight may present challenges in upholding these ethical principles and complying with existing legal frameworks.

KZNDHC emphasizes the importance of a cautious approach when considering any expansion of pharmacists' roles in HIV treatment and management. Patient safety, comprehensive assessments, continuity of care, and recognition of comorbidities are critical factors that require

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KZNDHC is an independent practitioner association based in Kwa-Zulu Natal. It has a membership of 1200 doctors in the private sector.

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