



16 June 2020

We were dismayed to learn that yesterday, without warning, Professor Ebrahim Variava was suspended from his post as the Head of Internal Medicine at the Tshepong public sector hospital in Klerksdorp, where he has worked tirelessly for the past twenty years. This is at the precise moment when the COVID-19 epidemic is taking hold in our country, and his leadership is needed the most.

The first person medical officers in rural parts of the North West province think of when they have a difficult HIV or TB patient, Prof Variava is known to be a principled clinical activist, who is dedicated to his patients, as well as a passionate academic, internationally renowned for his cutting edge research into HIV, TB, MDR and XDR TB.

Over the twenty years our organisation has been in operation, Prof Variava's conduct and dedication to both patient care and academia has been beyond reproach. He has always prioritised the best patient care. Prof Variava is also an outspoken advocate for those who are ill and has frequently raised essential medicine stockout alerts.

The best interests of the patients, the hospital, and its community are clearly not served by the suspension of Professor Variava.

We call on the Department of Health to withdraw his suspension effective immediately and urgently consider dialogue to resolve any differences.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors, staff members and healthcare worker members of the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society (SAHCS)

Professor Yunus Moosa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yunus Moosa", written over a horizontal line.

President of SAHCS and Chairperson of the Board

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