



FOR PROFESSIONALS

SINCE 1941



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## **MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS' CONFIDENCE IN FUTURE OF PROFESSION DROPS – SURVEY**

*28 August 2012:* Confidence among medical professionals in South Africa regarding their own profession has taken a serious knock, with few saying they would encourage their children to enter their profession, according to a quarterly survey conducted by PPS, the financial services provider focused on graduate professionals.

The survey of approximately 850 of South Africa's medical professionals recorded a 7 percentage point drop to 40% when medical professionals were asked whether they would encourage their children to enter the profession. Furthermore, respondents' confidence in the future of their profession declined by 2 percentage points to 73% for the second quarter of 2012 from 75% previously.

According to Gerhard Joubert, Head of Group Marketing and Stakeholder Relations at PPS, the recent controversy around the tariff regulations proposed by the Health Professionals Council of South Africa (HPCSA) may have left many medical professionals uncertain about the future of their occupation in the country. "This was clear by the threat of legal action from medical and dental professional associations."

"While it is positive to note that the guidelines have since been placed on hold for further negotiation, due to the negative response from medical professionals, the new pricing structure needs to be carefully considered and the concerns of medical professionals must be addressed before it is fully implemented."

The second largest drop in confidence levels recorded by the survey of medical professionals revolved around the standard of education in South Africa which revealed a 4 percentage point drop from 48% to 44% quarter-on-quarter.

"The textbook crisis in the Limpopo province has left a bitter taste in the mouths of many professionals who know that the foundation for a successful career, and ultimately the solution to the current skills shortage facing South Africa, begins at the basic education level. It is imperative that better efforts are made to ensure a quality education is provided to the youth of the country," says Joubert.

Furthermore, the survey indicated that 96% of medical professionals are concerned about the lack of mathematics and science graduates in South Africa, up 1 percentage point quarter-on-quarter, while 91% of medical professionals are concerned about the rising cost of tertiary education, up 2 percentage points compared to the last quarter. On their confidence of whether the current training of medical students is up to standard, the result was down 1 percentage point from 57% to 56%.

“The consistent decline in confidence among medical professionals for education related questions serves as a warning bell and highlights that current problems in the education sector must be addressed in order to attract and retain vital medical professional skills in South Africa,” says Joubert.

Confidence in the future of the healthcare system in South Africa also dropped by 3 percentage points from 47% to 44% quarter on quarter.

“This drop in confidence is particularly concerning as this is the specific sector that these professionals operate in, however, the decline is in line with the drop of confidence in the future of their profession in the country,” says Joubert.

Despite these concerns, the survey also revealed that 62% of respondents agreed with the principle behind National Health Insurance (NHI), up 3 percentage points from the previous quarter and the highest confidence level recorded for this particular question among all the other professions\* surveyed by PPS. However, only 15% - down 3 percentage points quarter-on-quarter - said that they believed that NHI is the solution to fix the country's ailing health system.

“The decline recorded across multiple areas in the second quarter survey of medical professionals revealed some serious areas of concern for these professionals. It is imperative that the concerns highlighted by the survey are taken into consideration to ensure a sustainable future of South Africa's healthcare sector,” concludes Joubert.

#### **Other results from the survey**

- Confidence on whether the respondents will remain in South Africa for the foreseeable future was 76%, down one percentage point
- Confidence in crime rates improving over the next five years was 39%, down 2 percentage points
- Confidence in unemployment improving over the next five years was 38%, down 2 percentage points
- When asked whether the respondents were in favour of a capitation system (a method of paying service providers a set amount for each assigned patient regardless of whether they require treatment or how long this takes) for doctors 25% said yes, up 3 percentage points
- Confidence in their ability to earn a sufficient income should NHI be implemented was 53%, down 1 percentage point

\*Advocates, Attorneys, Chartered Accountants, Dentists, Engineers, Medical and Pharmacists, among others.

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#### **Additional information:**

PPS boasts in excess of 200,000 members who enjoy access to a comprehensive suite of financial and healthcare products that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of graduate professionals.

PPS is the largest South African company of its kind that still embraces an ethos of mutuality, which means that it exists solely for the benefit of its members. Thus, members who are policyholders can exclusively share in the profits of PPS Insurance and those who have PPS Investments products can also share in the profits of PPS Investments.

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