



EFF WELCOMES SECTION 59 INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON UNFAIR RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY MEDICAL SCHEMES DISCOVERY, GEMS AND MEDSCHEME

Tuesday, 19 January 2021

The Economic Freedom Fighters welcomes the dismissal of the Government Employees Medical Scheme's (GEMS) application to block the release of the Section 59 Investigation's interim Report into racial profiling of doctors by medical aid scheme providers. The decision to dismiss the application due to a lack of urgency is a victory for all efforts to combat institutionalized racism and will allow South Africans to get an understanding of how racism in the medical sector operates.

According to the now released Interim Report, which looked into the unfair racial discrimination practiced by medical schemes namely, Discovery, GEMS and Medscheme, black medical practitioners were more likely to be found to have committed Fraud, Waste and/or Abuse (FWA) than their non-black counter-parts. The report found that black practitioners were 1.4 times more likely to be classified as having committed FWA than their non-black counter-parts. The report found that black registered councillors, social workers and psychologists were three times more likely to be identified as FWA cases as compared to their non-black counterparts, and general black practitioners were 1.5 times more likely to be identified as FWA cases.

On a breakdown of the racial discrimination by three schemes, GEMS, Discovery and Medscheme, GEMS was found to be 80% more likely to identify black practitioners as FWA cases, Discovery was 35% more likely to do the same, and Medscheme was insanely 330% more likely to identify black practitioners as guilty of FWA.

The EFF is alarmed, but not shocked that the Government-owned GEMS has a shocking 80% likelihood to racially discriminate against black practitioners in the medical sector. It certifies our long-held belief that South African government has no interest in the development of black professionals and transforming the sector, and acts as an agent of the deliberate victimization of black people.

More damningly, the report found that there was zero-percent probability that this discrimination happened by chance, confirming that there is a deliberate anti-black discrimination against black medical practitioners in South Africa. This means that there is zero-chance that the deliberate identifying of black practitioners as fraudulent was a mistake or was as a result of innocent technical systems.

The suggestion by the medical schemes, that their racial profiling was as result of their algorithm flagging outlier practices must be viewed as further evidence that the racism by these medical schemes is so entrenched, that even their systems are designed to flag majority black people in a medical sector that black people are not predominantly practicing.

The EFF welcomes the report and calls for stringent action against all the implicated medical schemes. Furthermore, we call for a complete overhaul of the algorithm systems in place to identify fraud and wastage by medical practitioners, and all of those leading these medical schemes to face the full might of the law.

We take note of the absence of the Minister of Health and Minister of Public Administration at the court during the attempts to stop the release of this damning report. They failed to file papers in support of the release of the report in their respective capacities as regulator and employer respectively. The ruling party ministers are fast asleep at work or deliberately complicit to Nazi like profiling of black medical professionals.

There must also be a concerted effort by the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS), to identify all of those black practitioners who have fallen victim to a racist system that criminalizes black practitioners in order to keep the medical sector white-dominated.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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