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**REGARDING THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE
FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

**AN OPEN LETTER
TO THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER AND CLINICAL REVIEW TEAM OF CAMAF**

**COPYING IN:
THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF HEALTH,
THE HONOURABLE SHADOW MINISTER OF HEALTH,
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,
AND OTHERS**

The Educational Psychology Association of South Africa (EPASSA) believes that CAMAF is misrepresenting the Scope of Practice for Educational Psychologists in violation of the rights of patients and the profession of Psychology. This is the type of activity that EPASSA has sought to bring to the attention of the Minister of Health, the HPCSA's Professional Board for Psychology, the Council for Medical Schemes, the South African Human Rights Commission, the Competitions Board, political parties and the press. (See letter attached).

In a letter sent to an educational psychologist this week, CAMAF quotes selective phrases from the scope of practice regulation and excludes others. EPASSA members have experienced an ongoing battle with CAMAF and certain other medical aids, which often seem to act as if they are the regulators and/or legally appointed interpreters of regulations pertaining to the field of psychology.

if they have the requisite training, skills, knowledge and/or experience, all psychologists, no matter their registration category, are legally entitled to evaluate behaviour, mental processes or personality adjustments; to use psychotherapeutic procedures to relieve or change personality, emotional, behavioural or adjustment problems or mental deficiencies; and to use psychological methods to prevent such problems or mental illnesses. No law explicitly states or ever has stated a condition that an educational psychologist may not deal with. Educational psychologists have core skills in the areas of assessment, psychotherapy and research. In addition, educational psychologists are particularly skilled in the areas of learning and development.

The current Chairperson of the Professional Board for Psychology, Professor Basil Pillay, has knowledge of the regulations and serves on the Psychology Advisory Panel of a medical aid scheme. I am forwarding this letter to him with the request that he corrects EPASSA's understanding if it is wrong. Until then, EPASSA believes that CAMAF and other medical aids must stop informing practitioners and/or patients what constitutes the scope of practice for Educational Psychologists.

EPASSA notes that in its letter to the educational psychologist concerned, CAMAF's Clinical Review Team wrote:

The matter relating to your request has been referred to the HPCSA's Board of Psychology for consideration, since they have requested data on all instances of possible "out of scope of practice" applications, in order to inform the Ministry in its preparation of the new Scope of Practice of the Sub-disciplines within the Scope of Practice of the Profession.

EPASSA is concerned that this could lead to McCarthyism, where accusations or insinuations are made against innocent people (in this case educational psychologists). Educational Psychologists are committed to their patients' wellbeing and should not feel threatened to step in line with suspect authoritative dictates. Nor should our profession be reduced to junk status through the actions of certain medical aids.

We would like medical aids to ask Professor Pillay if he disagrees with EPASSA's understanding of the Law before jumping to conclusions about the scope of practice. Should Professor Pillay disagree with our understanding, EPASSA shall ask Professor Pillay to direct us to any regulation or Law that contradicts our view.

Sincerely,

Dr Martin Strous
EPASSA Chairperson

cc:

The Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi
The Honourable Professor Wilmot James
Honourable Members of Parliament
Professor Basil Pillay, Professional Board for Psychology
Council for Medical Schemes
Competitions Board
South African Human Rights Commission
Psychology Organisations and EPASSA members
Members of the press