

SPEAKING NOTES
FOR THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, DR. JOE PHAAHLA, MP
CMSA ADMISSION CEREMONY FOR FELLOWS AND
CERTIFICANTS

DATE: 07 MARCH 2024

President of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa, Prof Johann Fagan

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to congratulate every candidate who is being admitted to the Colleges of Medicine this evening. We recognise the immense commitment and sacrifice that is required to specialise in any discipline and to stay the course of study and research over many years.

Allow me to also recognise the parents, spouses, and friends of each of you for the many family sacrifices that you have made to sponsor, support, and tolerate the hours of attention that you have lost to the dedication of your loved ones who we acknowledge and respect here this evening.

You candidates are advancing into an extremely elite family of important role-players in the health system. Specialists are revered by the public and respected by colleagues because they have more skills and knowledge than their peers in the medical profession, but also because each has shown their dedication over a long and hard slog to reach this point.

You have earned this respect. But you have also earned a huge responsibility because it is you who must guide and support the next generation of students to this pinnacle. You will be expected not only to care for your patients as diligently as possible but also to play the role of

teacher, mentor, and instructor for others. Your ethics will be acutely observed and judged along with your knowledge and skills. It is a challenging crown to wear.

I want to take this opportunity to assure you that the country's health system needs you no matter where you choose to serve. We are embarking on a journey into an integrated and reformed health system through the National Health Insurance (NHI). You will hear many alarmist and rather fantastical claims and distractions as pundits square up to protect or promote diverse interests. I would encourage you to engage with the facts and to become a part of the solutions to the many challenges that we face in providing affordable health care to the millions of people living in our country. There is more than enough work for everyone, and you will be able to build a satisfying and productive career in the country.

Enjoy this moment! Your professional colleagues have decided that you deserve the admission to the Colleges, for that is how the professions work, and how we maintain standards, ethics, and innovation. Get some rest when you can, there is much to do in caring for those we are called to serve.

Once more congratulations to everyone involved!

I thank you.