



Kenya Medical Association

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

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KENYA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

The Kenya Medical Association is the umbrella professional association for doctors in Kenya. KMA has a twin mission; To champion for the welfare of doctors and advocate for the highest standard of quality healthcare in the country and beyond.

The tragic loss of Dr. Desree Moraa Obwogi highlights the urgent need to confront the root causes of her tragic passing and address the significant challenges our medical interns and young doctors face with their mental health and working conditions;

- **Hostile Working Conditions:** Young doctors often face toxic work environments, including bullying, harassment, and lack of adequate support. These conditions not only diminish morale but also lead to mental distress and burnout.
- **Excessive Workloads:** The heavy demands placed on interns, often working excessively long hours without proper breaks or rest, mirrors the issues that prompted the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) in the European Union, which was designed to prevent excessive working hours and protect workers' health and safety. In Kenya, there is an urgent need for similar regulations to safeguard our young doctors from overwork and exhaustion.
- **Lack of Financial Stability:** The fact that Dr. Moraa and her peers were forced to work without pay is a gross injustice. Delayed payments and lack of proper compensation for interns is a recurrent issue that must be addressed immediately to prevent further financial strain and emotional stress on young doctors.
- **Inadequate Professional Support:** The lack of robust structured mentorship and guidance, which is essential in training environments, leaves interns vulnerable to feeling isolated, undervalued, and unsupported.

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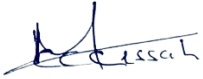
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Considering these critical issues, The Kenya Medical Association calls for immediate action from key stakeholders, including the **Ministry of Health**, the **Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council (KMPDC)**, **County Governments**, and **all Training institutions** to protect and support young doctors.

These institutions must ensure:

- **Safe and Supportive Working Conditions:** The working environment for medical interns must be reformed to prioritize their physical and mental well-being. Hospitals must foster supportive, non-toxic environments where interns are mentored, valued, and protected from burnout.
- **Fair compensation, timely placement and payment:** Delays in internship placement must be eliminated to prevent the financial and emotional strain that young doctors experience due to uncertainty in their career progression. Furthermore, it is unacceptable for medical interns to work without pay, especially given the financial strain of medical education. We demand immediate rectification of this injustice and call for mechanisms to ensure interns are paid promptly and fairly.
- **Work Hour Regulations:** Drawing on international standards such as the **European Working Time Directive (EWTB)** and the **UK Working Time Regulation (WTR)**, we advocate for the enforcement of reasonable work hours and mandatory rest periods for medical interns. These regulations have been established globally to protect healthcare workers from excessive workloads and to safeguard patient care.
- **Strengthen Mentorship Programs:** Ensure young doctors have access to strong mentorship, guidance, and support systems to enhance their professional growth and wellbeing.
- **Enhanced Oversight and Regulation:** The KMPDC and the Ministry of Health must enforce clear guidelines on working conditions and hours for medical interns, ensuring compliance and accountability across all healthcare facilities.
- **Mental Health Support:** Adhere to the **National Guidelines on Workplace Mental Wellbeing** and dedicating mental health resources and support systems that should be made readily available for medical interns and other healthcare professionals.

These significant matters demand a collective response from healthcare leaders, policymakers, and the medical fraternity to safeguard the well-being of medical interns and all healthcare workers. We stand united in our commitment to improving the welfare of medical interns and ensuring that their working environments are safe, supportive, and conducive to their professional growth.



DR. DIANA MARION
SECRETARY GENERAL

KENYA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION