

# Season's Greetings

## GEO NEWSLETTER

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December 2022

### MINIMUM WAGE

Increased on 1 March 2022 to  
R23,19 per hour (increased by  
6,9%)

### THRESHOLD OF EARNINGS

R224080,30 per annum  
(R18 673 p.m.)

Employees earning over the  
threshold of earnings are  
excluded from certain  
provisions such as maximum  
working hours as prescribed in  
the BCEA.

### EMPLOYEES SUBMITTING CLINIC NOTES

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act states in Section 23(2) that a medical certificate must be issued and signed by a medical practitioner or any other person who is *certified* to diagnose and treat patients *and* is registered with a professional council established by an Act of Parliament.

The Act referred to above is the Medical, Dental and Supplementary Health Service Professions Act (Act 56 of 1974).

In terms of Section 17 of Act 56 any person who examines, diagnoses and treats or prescribes medicine to a patient must be registered in terms of this Act.

The Act refers to a medical practitioner, psychologist, dentist and intern. The most important aspect of this section is that the professional must be *registered* as a practitioner in terms of the Act. Such a professional will be allocated a unique registration number.

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*“In terms of Section 17 of Act 56 any person who examines, diagnoses and treats or prescribes medicine to a patient must be registered in terms of this Act.”*

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### **This also includes a “Professional Nurse Practitioner”.**

Nurses are regulated by the South African Nurses Council (SANC).

SANC approved the “*SANC Position Statement on Issuing of Sick Notes by Professional Nurses Practitioners*” on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2020.

According to this Position Statement, a Professional Nurse Practitioner may issue a patient with a sick note. A Professional Nurse Practitioner is a person that is not only a qualified nurse but holds additional qualifications in Clinical Nursing Science, Health Assessment, Treatment and Care, and Occupational Health Nursing and is registered as such with SANC.

A Professional Nurse Practitioner should not issue a sick note for longer than two days. If a longer period is required then the patient must be referred to a medical practitioner.

Nurses who do not possess the qualifications mentioned above **may not** issue sick notes and can only issue **letters of attendance**. Note that a letter of attendance is not a sick note (or medical certificate).

### **A sick note issued by a Professional Nurse Practitioner must contain the following:**

- The name, address, qualification and SANC reference no. of the Nursing Practitioner;
- The name of the patient;
- The date and time of the examination;
- Whether the certificate is being issued as a result of the personal observations of the Nursing practitioner or as a result of information received from the patient based on acceptable medical grounds;
- The exact period of the recommended sick leave;
- The date of issuing of the sick note;
- Identity of the nursing practitioner who issued the sick note which shall be personally signed by the nursing practitioner next to his or her initials and surname printed or written in block letters.

*“ According to this Position Statement, a professional nurse practitioner may issue a patient with a sick note.. ”*



## In Summary,

A clinic nurse that does not hold the additional qualifications mentioned above cannot issue a sick note and as such, an employer does not have to recognize a clinic note as a sick note.

A sick note issued by a Professional Nurse Practitioner must meet the above requirements (SANC registration number, qualifications, etc).

A Professional Nurse Practitioner may be present at a clinic. It is, therefore, important to check that the clinic note brought to you by an employee is an *attendance note* or a *sick note* from a Professional Nurse Practitioner meeting the above-mentioned requirements.

A professional nurse practitioner should not book a patient off for more than two days. Note that the SANC position on sick notes states that a professional nurse practitioner should ‘preferably not book a patient off for longer than two days.’

## Festive and New Year wishes

May your 2023 be filled with abundance, health and happiness!

From all of us at the GEO, we wish all our members, staff and officials a safe and joyful festive season.

May God bless you and your loved ones.

Best regards

Andre Rabe (Chairman)

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