

## Media Statement

### BOGUS PRACTITIONER ARRESTED IN KAGISO

**11 February 2021**

**For immediate release**

**Pretoria** –The Inspectorate Office within the ambit of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in collaboration with the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department and the Ekurhuleni East Crime Intelligence Unit conducted a joint operation at an optometry practice opposite the Kagiso Traffic and Licencing Department.

During the inspection, it was found that Mr Thabang Thelonius Mohapi was practising as an optometrist whilst not qualified as an optometrist nor being registered with Council. Mr Mohapi was found to be conducting driver's license eye screening tests and issuing eye screening certificates under the pretext of Mr Mashile Jacob Gole who is registered with Council.

It was also established that Mr Gole was operating at his other optometry practice in the Westonaria area whilst Mr Mohapi was conducting the eye screening tests in his absence at his practice in Kagiso. Mr Gole pre-signed blank eye screening certificates for Mr Mohapi's completion. It was further established that Mr Mohapi had screened approximately 1 500 eye screening tests since the beginning of October 2020 (when the practice in Kagiso was opened) at a fee of R150. This amounts to a total of approximately R225 000, of which Mr Gole would share 50% of the fees with Mr Mohapi.

Both Mr Mohapi and Mr Gole were arrested and taken into custody at the Kagiso SAPS where Mr Mohapi is being charged with fraud and contravening Section 17(1)(a) of the Health Professions Act, (Act 56 of 1974), which is a criminal offence in terms of Section 17(5), for practising as an optometrist whilst not being registered with the HPCSA, and Mr Gole is being charged with fraud.

They are both scheduled to appear in the Kagiso Magistrates Court today.

The Inspectorate Office is advising practitioners registered with Council to adhere to ensure that they employ practitioners who are registered with Council. The HPCSA welcomes the tip-offs that members of the community have provided thus far. Members of the community are encouraged to continue to report all suspicious illegal practices by unregistered persons (bogus practitioners).

The Inspectorate Office is based at the Council's Head Office in Pretoria, with regional offices in Cape Town, Durban and East London.

**END**

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### **About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)**

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) also known as Council is a statutory body established under the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974. The HPCSA is committed to protecting the public and guiding the professions. The mission of the HPCSA is quality and equitable healthcare for all.

The HPCSA is mandated to regulate the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to education, training and registration, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

In order to safeguard the public and guiding the professions, registration in terms of the Act is a prerequisite for practising any of the health professions registrable with Council.

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