

EPWP PHARMACY ASSISTANTS PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTES TO IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) Pharmacy Assistants initiative has been implemented in Gauteng since 2015. This initiative is a sub-programme within the EPWP Social Sector, which its focus is directed towards the delivery of human development outcomes and improving the quality of life within communities. The learnership programme was funded through the National Skills Fund which was allocated to the Department of Public Works (EPWP branch) by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The Pharmacy Assistants Training Programme is aimed at addressing the challenge of skills shortage within the pharmaceutical industry and alleviates poverty, unemployment among young people, especially women. The aim is also to utilise the country's public employment

programme to drive the delivery of health services to the people of the Province.

The training is structured into two phases with the first one being a 12 months Basic Pharmacy Assistant Programme and the second one being the 12 months Post Basic Pharmacy Assistant. The training is both theoretical and practical.

The learners work for 40 hours per week, however those who are placed in the private sector, do work overtime and they are paid for it. The participants while on training earn a monthly stipend of R1900 which is in line with the Ministerial Determination on EPWP.

This training is a partnership between National Department of Public Works (EPWP), Gauteng Department of Health, Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority and the South African Pharmacy Council. The learners were placed at various government and private healthcare facilities for practical training and they graduated in November 2016.

