

Medical watchdog head may settle

By [Tamar Kahn](#)

24 Apr 2015

More than a year after Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) registrar Monwabisi Gantsho was suspended by Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi, pending the outcome of a forensic probe into alleged corruption, the issue appears no closer to resolution.

On Thursday, 23 April 2015 it emerged that the chairman of the disciplinary inquiry appointed by the council to probe Dr Gantsho's conduct, Nazeer Cassim SC, had recommended that the two sides try to reach a settlement instead.

The council is a statutory body established in terms of the Medical Schemes Act, and is responsible for regulating the R113bn medical schemes industry and protecting consumers' interests. It is just one of many government institutions mired in a leadership controversy - others include South African Airways, the National Prosecuting Authority and the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission.

Dr Gantsho was suspended last April, pending a forensic investigation by law firm Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs (ENS). The firm was asked to probe former Medshield curator Themba Langa's claim that Dr Gantsho had tried to solicit a bribe from him, and investigate the circumstances surrounding a R817,000 tax judgment obtained against Dr Gantsho by the South African Revenue Service in 2012.

At the time Dr Gantsho raised concerns about Langa's decisions during his curatorship, claiming he had inappropriately given scheme business to his own law firm.

ENS has submitted its report to the council, but Dr Gantsho said he was still in the dark as to its findings. Council chairman Yusuf Veriava has previously said that public disclosure of the report might jeopardise Dr Gantsho's disciplinary inquiry.

On Tuesday, Veriava told Parliament that the inquiry had been set for May 9, but gave no indication that Cassim had issued a ruling on the matter last Friday.

Neither the council nor Dr Gantsho's lawyer, Lelethu Mbangi, would provide a copy of the ruling to Business Day. Although the two sides emphasised different aspects of its contents, it is clear Cassim recommended the parties settle.

Mbangi said Cassim had said it would be a waste of money to pursue the disciplinary inquiry as Dr Gantsho's contract was almost at an end.

"We are now involved in talks with the CMS to pave the way for the cordial release of Dr Gantsho as registrar and CEO of

CMS effectively from 30 June 2015."

Council spokeswoman Elsabe Conradie said that Cassim had made recommendations aimed at resolving the matter, but if the parties failed to agree the hearing scheduled for May 9 would proceed.

Dr Gantsho said the processes followed for the ENS forensic investigation and the disciplinary inquiry "were seriously flawed" from the outset.

"The investigation's terms of reference and forensic report were never provided to (my) lawyers nor made public. The said inquiries erred by singling the registrar out and excluding other implicated high-ranking CMS office bearers, therefore making the process inconsistent, (a) witchhunt and biased. The investigative internal departments of the council would need to also be investigated, in order to root out corruption (and) heavy-handed rogue units."

Source: Business Day via I-Net Bridge

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