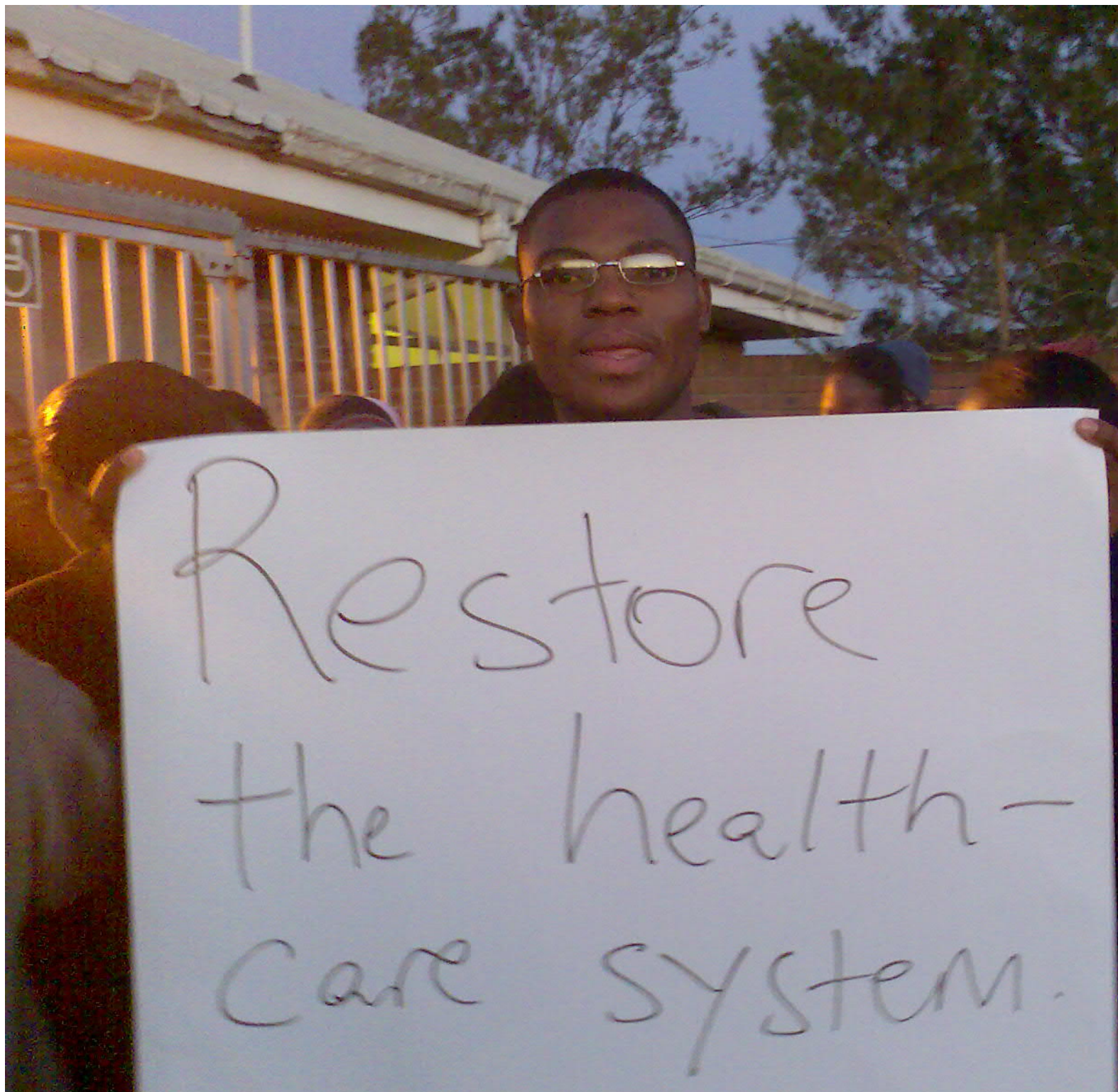


New Medicines Bill will Undermine the Scientific Governance of Medicine

By *moderator*

Created 2008/06/30 - 4:31pm

30 June, 2008 - 16:31 ? moderator



The [Medicines and Related Substances Amendment Bill, 2008](#) was formally introduced to Parliament on 17 June 2008. Parliament has called for submissions by 18 July. It will hold public hearings on 5 to 6 August. The Bill is disastrous. It

will undermine the scientific governance of medicine and potentially reverse the gains of the recent [court victory by TAC and the South African Medical Association in their case against Matthias Rath, the Minister of Health and others](#).

[Here is a letter written to the Head of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health by TAC and the AIDS Law Project \(ALP\)](#) indicating our intention to make an oral submission to Parliament on the bill and raising our broad concerns with the bill.

[Here is a detailed submission by TAC and ALP sent to the Department of Health](#) on an earlier version of the Bill which is almost identical to the tabled one. Despite meeting with the Department and explaining our concerns, the bill tabled with Parliament does not address any of the concerns raised in this submission.

[Here is an analysis by TAC and the ALP](#) of a [report by the Ministerial Task Team on the Restructuring of the Medicines Regulatory Affairs and Medicines Control Council](#). It demonstrates that the recommendations of this task team were largely ignored when the Medicines and Related Substances Amendment Bill, 2008 was drafted.

There are numerous problems with the bill, but the main issue is that it would give the Minister of Health the power to block the registration of medicines of proven quality, safety and efficacy, as well as to allow the sale and provision of untested ?treatments? and ?cures?.

In other words, a technical scientific task, determining the quality, efficacy and efficacy of medicines, will be subject to political interference. There already is severe political interference with the scientific governance of medicine, as the Rath case and other incidents of the [state supporting pseudo-science shows](#), but this Bill aims to give the Minister's meddling legislative force.

TAC will campaign for this bill to be withdrawn. In weeks to come, we will release further details of our efforts.

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