



The external and internal dynamics within and outside the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa in its growth path

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As we have all witnessed the growth in membership of the PSSA in recent years, we can also expect to see the changes and dynamics that naturally accompany such growth. Like all societies and organisations, the Pharmaceutical Society is a living entity—and it is not exempt from the realities that come with changes and development.

I will break down the realities of the visible involvement emerging within the PSSA by examining its various structures, i.e. branches, sectors, the Young Pharmacists' Group, SAPSF, and other stakeholders.

Branches are the pillars of any organisation—they are where growth truly begins. This includes all branches of the PSSA, along with its various sectors. As the backbone of a living organism like the PSSA, branches play a critical role in sustaining momentum. With a few exceptions, we've seen significant changes in leadership at branch level in recent years. This transition has sparked renewed interest among pharmacists across the country to engage with and belong to the PSSA, ultimately driving the Society's growth.

The initiative to revive inactive branches, which began 16 months ago, is progressing well and continues to generate strong interest from members of the PSSA affiliated with those branches. While a few branches still require support to ensure their sustainability and continued service to their members, the response so far has been encouraging. I must acknowledge and appreciate the warm and welcoming reception we have received from the branches we have already visited—they have been both accommodating and enthusiastic.

Branch leaders must recognise that members residing or working within the jurisdiction of a branch are often active and engaged in their own right. As the PSSA, we are guided by their experiences and perspectives when assessing the progress—or challenges—within a branch. We are committed to listening to our members, and when issues arise, we will engage openly with both branch leadership and the concerned members to find constructive solutions.

As more pharmacists—especially young pharmacists—continue to join the PSSA, we are seeing a growing trend of involvement and an increase in questions asking what the branch or PSSA is doing for its members. On a positive note, many branches are actively serving their members, with annual AGMs held regularly and officials elected to their positions. To these branches I say: Well done.

Sectors are the four pillars of the PSSA, and through the unity we share, the PSSA continues to grow its membership year after year. Sectors play a vital role within the PSSA, and the ongoing involvement and enthusiasm of members across all sectors have not gone unnoticed. The increasing interest in leadership roles is especially commendable. In the past, some sectors have held conferences and gatherings without involving PSSA leaders, but this must change. The Presidential Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa looks forward to participating in these events, providing members with the opportunity to learn about the current initiatives and benefits of their PSSA membership.

The Young Pharmacists' Group (YPG) is vital to the continued survival and growth of the PSSA, as they represent our future leaders. When the PSSA adopted the YPG concept from FIP ten years ago, it was with the clear purpose of nurturing future leadership and making succession planning a daily reality. The YPG has brought tremendous activism to the PSSA's structures and has grown significantly over the past decade, with representation in nearly every PSSA branch across the country. As leaders, it is essential that we listen attentively to their constructive contributions, as this will ultimately benefit the entire Society.

We have seen growing interest from the South African Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (SAPSF) since the PSSA embraced them as a stakeholder. While this progress brings its own challenges—requiring us to provide ongoing guidance—I am optimistic about the students' future within the PSSA. It is important that we all encourage them to maintain consistency and professionalism in their public statements and actions, as this helps preserve the valuable relationships we have built with other stakeholders.

Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank the Presco members who volunteered to be part of the delegation visiting the branches. We remain committed to continuing the work that benefits the PSSA, ensuring that its mandate is fulfilled for the benefit of all its members—including pharmacists, pharmacy students, pharmacist's assistants, technicians, and all other pharmacy personnel.

Thank you