



“Keep your eyes on the stars, and your feet on the ground” ~ Theodore Roosevelt

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The above quote reminds one to always aim high and to reach for greatness in all that we do. However, in doing so, we should strive to work hard whilst staying grounded and balanced. Being a pharmacist is almost an intrinsic calling where one has the strong desire to make a positive difference in a person's life. As healthcare workers, we have such important roles to play and we should always value these positions.

I am deeply humbled and grateful to SAAHIP in electing me to the position of President. I commit to leading with excellence, passion, compassion, devotion and to the best of my ability. During our national SAAHIP conference (April 2025), delegates were exposed to a brilliant keynote speaker, Anthea van den Berg, who started the conference on a high note. She covered the topic of personal branding and telling our 'stories', because often we are so busy delivering services, we forget to highlight our achievements and what it is, that Pharmacists actually do.

The previous SAAHIP Presidential team set out their term with 4 important pillars and as the current president of SAAHIP, I want to move forward with these pillars i.e. collaboration, shared vision, commitment and embracing innovation. This speaks to me as a pharmacist and therefore, I fully endeavour to carry this vision through, improving and building on it. For us to surge ahead in the healthcare space, we need to move together in unison, support each other and ensure that all cadres of pharmacy in both public and private settings are fully engaged and included.

The pharmacy profession is rapidly evolving. The practice of pharmacy or the pharmacists' role has changed from the days of the apothecary, where compounding of medicines took place, followed by handing of these medicines to the patient or those requesting it, with a sprinkling of medical advice. Most of the evidence used was based on trial and error. Currently, pharmacists are recognised healthcare professionals, who are part of multi-disciplinary teams, delivering expert medicine advice both to patients and other healthcare workers, ensuring therapeutic goals are achieved in evidence-based ways.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), responsible for global health, developed the 7-star pharmacist concept (2014) to provide a framework/understanding of what a pharmacist is. It describes the roles, responsibilities, skill sets and even qualities that a pharmacist should possess. The 7-star pharmacist is a leader, teacher, lifelong

learner, caregiver, decision maker, communicator and manager. More recently this has evolved to the 10-star pharmacist, to add on researcher, entrepreneur and team player. A 10-star pharmacist is so much more than just providing medication to a patient. I believe it is important to always remind ourselves what the responsibilities/roles of 10-star pharmacist should be:



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1. **Researcher** – a pharmacist must practice evidence-based care ensuring that best care is given to patients. A pharmacist may be part of drug utilisation studies or drug-development research or be involved in policy development, which may contribute to the overall current body of pharmaceutical knowledge and expertise.
2. **Communicator** – The pharmacist plays an integral role in communicating medicine- and disease-related information effectively to the patient. We are key role players in the multi-disciplinary team and also responsible for communication with other stakeholders.
3. **Caregiver** – The pharmacist must always put the patient and the agreed goal of therapy first.
4. **Decision maker** – A pharmacist must be able to think quickly and rationally, and this may involve patient's therapy or care, drug budgets or ethical considerations.
5. **Lifelong learner** – When you become a pharmacist, you will be learning forever. The profession is dynamic and we need to stay abreast of pharmacy topics, new research, new healthcare strategies, technology and methods to enhance our practice.
6. **Teacher** – Pharmacists must mentor the future of the profession i.e. young pharmacists and pharmacy associate staff. We are also in strategic positions to educate other healthcare professionals, by imparting our knowledge to them.
7. **Entrepreneur** – We should be able to come up with novel pharmaceutical ideas, quality improvement projects, and drug research ideas and develop plans for enhanced operations within the healthcare sector.

8. **Leader** – We are responsible for training both the young pharmacists and the associate staff and being their leader. We are constantly in positions of leadership in the multi-disciplinary teams and we should lead with grace.
9. **Manager** – Pharmacists must manage resources, staff, patients' wellbeing and overall co-ordination of pharmaceutical knowledge and information, according to the prescribed guidelines.
10. **Team Player** – We need to support colleagues, collaborate and be part of the team. Being a pharmacist requires you to be adaptable and ready for change/challenges.

A pharmacist is an integral part of the healthcare system. We are responsible for the provision of quality healthcare to patients and are

the custodians of medicine. Our medicines expertise sets us apart from other healthcare professionals. It is indeed time for us to solidify our place again in healthcare by practicing being 10-star pharmacists. As pharmacists our roles are so diverse, yet so incredibly rewarding. Tell your story, increase your visibility, and own your pharmaceutical space. Theodore Roosevelt's quote above urged us to aim high but remain grounded. I urge you, my fellow pharmacists and colleagues to always keep your eyes on the stars, just remember for pharmacists, there are always '10'!

I look forward to the opportunity of leading, together with my National Executive committee, the South African Association of Hospital and Institutional Pharmacists.