



President's Message

Tshifhiwa Rabali

PSSA President

As we step into 2024, our profession is undergoing daily changes, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. The year 2023 witnessed significant progress achieved by the PSSA, particularly in the continued growth of our membership. This was facilitated by the ongoing initiative to rejuvenate and support the smaller branches, a program that is set to persist until the leadership is fully satisfied. Furthermore, the revival of inactive branches is also a key focus. Members are strongly encouraged to actively voice their concerns within their respective branches and to demand accountability from their leaders, especially in terms of upholding and implementing the constitution in all facets of their work.

There has also been a lot of comments that were submitted to different stakeholders like the National Department of Health (NDoH), South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC), and others. This engagement is set to continue throughout the year, aiming to enhance the Society's visibility and encourage more colleagues to join. Additionally, all existing Society programs, along with new initiatives, will persist, ensuring a comprehensive and sustained approach to the Society's objectives.

This year, 2024, we also pride ourselves by being the first country on the African continent to be hosting the International Federation of Pharmacists Congress (FIP). We urge all of you colleagues to be part of this once in a lifetime experience of having our colleagues from all over the world gathering on our doorstep.

One of the SAPC's Notice board was about the experience that might be needed when a pharmacist is recruited as a Responsible Pharmacist. This has been a thorny issue in many circles as there has been a trend of hiring and allowing pharmacists who have just completed their community service year to be Responsible Pharmacists with no experience at all and that puts our fellow colleagues in a precarious situation as mistakes might happen and jeopardise their young career but because of monetary remuneration, the person takes the position.

The Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa's stand is clear on this issue as we don't want our colleagues to be in the wrong because of

someone who is going to benefit by employing them as a Responsible Pharmacist. Experience will always be a good thing to have before taking that huge responsibility. The proposal from SAPC is that the pharmacist should have at least 3 years of practising as a pharmacist, which we are ready to engage with them on, but not on the proposal of having a short course, as that will be more burdening to our colleagues with council fees that are already not affordable and the course is not justified.

The National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill has emerged as a prominent issue in 2023 following its passage by the NCOP in parliament. The bill is currently awaiting the President's signature to become law. The PSSA has established communication with a senior NHI official, and there have been email exchanges between the PSSA and the official. The Society aims to arrange a meeting with the official during the year or extend an invitation to the next National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting, facilitating direct engagement with colleagues. The PSSA is committed to monitoring the developments related to this issue.

Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the significant contributions of the YPG. The Society encourages the YPG to sustain their commendable work, emphasizing their pivotal role as the future of the profession. The PSSA advocates for the YPG's active presence across all branches to foster collective growth within the Society. Additionally, the ongoing success of the mentorship program underscores the importance of its continuation, as it serves as a platform for the transfer of knowledge from seasoned pharmacists to their younger counterparts.

The coming NEC meeting in February 2024, will be the last with Ivan Kotzé as the Executive Director of PSSA after being with us for so many years. It is befitting for me to say the following to him on behalf of the PSSA: I would like to wish you well during your retirement and be blessed in whatever you want to do in future. Your presence at the Society has been like a pillar holding a structure for all the years. We've seen and heard all the good things that you did for the Society and for that, we thank you very much Sir.