



President's Message

Dear Colleagues

As we enter 2026, I do so with a strong sense of optimism for our profession. The past year was demanding. We faced supply challenges, regulatory pressures, and the ongoing reality of serving our communities in a difficult economic climate. Yet, despite this, pharmacists across South Africa stood firm. Our strength lies not only in endurance, but in our shared commitment to patients and to one another.

South African pharmacists do far more than dispense medicines. Every day, we provide solutions, reassurance, and continuity of care. That spirit of resilience and service defines our profession and remains central to the work of the PSSA. We have consistently shown that challenges are not obstacles, but opportunities to lead.

This was clearly demonstrated through PiMaRT. South African pharmacists possess world-class skills and are well-positioned to expand their role in healthcare delivery. The successful court case, which confirmed our right to provide these services, was a major milestone. As we await full implementation, the significance is clear: improved access to care, including faster access to HIV treatment, and meaningful relief for an overstretched health system. When pharmacists are empowered to practise to the full extent of their training, patients and communities benefit.

The same determination was evident during the intern placement challenges this year. Rather than disengaging or resorting to public frustration, the PSSA worked directly with the government to find practical solutions. At the same time, members stepped up by sharing opportunities, offering guidance, and mentoring interns. This collective effort reinforced our role in strengthening the healthcare workforce and supporting the next generation of pharmacists.

Resilience is also seen in the everyday actions of individual pharmacists. A recent example from a Cape Town community pharmacy illustrates this well. Faced with a medicine stock-out and unable to reach the prescriber by phone, the pharmacy team took responsibility. A pharmacy assistant walked down the road to the doctor's rooms, explained the situation in person, and secured an alternative prescription. That simple but determined action ensured uninterrupted care for a vulnerable patient. These stories are not rare; they happen daily across the country.

Pharmacists are problem-solvers. We act where others hesitate, close gaps in care, and earn the trust of the communities we serve. These efforts, taken together, reflect the true character of our profession.

As your professional body, the PSSA remains committed to advocating for you, supporting professional development, and strengthening our collective voice. Our contribution to society is significant: improving medicine use, preventing harm, promoting wellness, and advancing equitable access to healthcare.

As we move through 2026, I encourage you to remain positive and united. Support one another, innovate where possible, and hold fast to the spirit of Ubuntu that underpins our work.

I extend my warmest wishes to you and your families for a healthy, successful, and fulfilling year ahead. Importantly, 2026 also marks 80 years of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa. This milestone year will be one of reflection, pride, and celebration on many levels, as we honour our past and look confidently to the future.

Warm regards

Renier Coetzee
PSSA President