



Saying farewell to Ivan Kotzé

Ivan Kotzé has served as Executive Director of the PSSA for 30 years and retired at the end of March 2024. He has a history of life-long service to the profession both locally and internationally and an impeccable record of developing and promoting the PSSA over the past 30 years.



Before he was appointed Executive Director of the PSSA in 1994, Ivan was employed by the Department of Health from 1984-1994, where he held the position of Deputy Director, Medicines Control. His experience included inspections locally and abroad, giving him a deep understanding and insight into the application of medicine law. Amongst others, he represented the South Africa Government at several meetings in Vienna, Austria, of the International Narcotics Control Board of the United Nations. The knowledge thus gained was to stand him in good stead in his new position as Director of PSSA as the country, and its laws went through a vast transformation at the time. Health Councils such as the Pharmacy Council, HPCSA, and Department of Health all underwent a transformation. This required forging new working relationships and insight into developing new laws and standards for pharmacy practice. Ivan's experience and input largely ensured that the best interests of the pharmacy were included in all these changes.

Over the past 30 years, there have been an unprecedented number of changes to all laws pertaining to pharmacy as well as the introduction of new laws and regulations, such as Labour Law, Competition Act, POPIA, Electronic Communications & Transmissions Act, Consumer Protection Act, BEE Act, etc, all of which impact on the practice of pharmacy. There have been challenges, such as the introduction of lay ownership, new pricing regulations, and the introduction of PAs and PCDT pharmacists. Throughout this time, Ivan's insight and knowledge proved to be invaluable. He steered all PSSA presentations made to the Health Committee of Parliament, instructed, briefed, and supported the legal teams in the various court challenges and gave generously of his time and talent in assisting other bodies, such as USAP (now

ICPA), e.g. in its representations to the Competition Commission. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the wording in Hansard of the conditions of open ownership as accepted by Parliament are those used by Ivan in the PSSA submission.

It is no exaggeration to say that the profession owes Ivan a huge debt of gratitude for constantly ensuring that the best interests of pharmacy have been maintained in our laws.

Ivan's insight, patience, and sound legal argument characterised all these submissions and negotiations. This won him great respect from all, including highly-ranked civil servants, Ministers, and lawyers. This is reflected in the fact that his advice is often sought by these people and the fact that he has been invited to serve on a number of national committees, such as the then MCC Veterinary Committee and 22 Appeal committees in terms of Section 24 of the Medicines Act, Act 101 of 1965.

Ivan's expertise and leadership have been recognised in other areas. He has represented the PSSA at PPS since 1994. He is a current Trustee of the PPS Holdings Trust—appointed in August 2001. He has also served for several years on the PPS Insurance Company and the PPS Group Audit Committee. He was appointed as a non-executive Director of PPS Health Care Administrators (Pty) Ltd in June 2017. Under his guidance, PPS has developed some unique services for pharmacists.

In the international pharmacy arena, Ivan is highly regarded and respected. Ivan was elected President of the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA) in 2007 and served two terms for four years. He also served as a Trustee for the CPA for several years. In recognition of his valuable contribution to the CPA, he was honoured with Fellowship of the CPA in July 2017.

For many years, Ivan has represented the PSSA as a Councillor on the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Council. His contribution to the work of FIP and wise counsel is much appreciated, and he is highly regarded by his peers internationally.

When Ivan took over as Director of the PSSA, the Society was in dire need of transformation. The Society had sold MediKredit so that future income would rely solely on membership fees and investments. Until then, much committee time and effort were taken up with the business of MediKredit. Now the Society had to change focus, become more inclusive of all practice sectors, and concentrate on the professional interests of its members.

Ivan, using his sound management skills of good planning and organising, considered personnel management, strict financial planning and budgetary control, and clear vision and leadership, saw to the transformation and development of the Society to fulfilling its vision of becoming *“the undisputed leader and guardian of the pharmacy profession.”* The hard work in achieving this enormous task included:

- Writing a new inclusive Constitution providing for all Sectors and Branches.
- Developing a new Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals.
- Forging and maintaining good working relationships with SAPC, other statutory bodies, Government departments and voluntary professional organisations.
- Membership growth and transformation to become more inclusive of all pharmacists. Through ensuring excellent professional service provision membership is valued and has grown steadily.
- Staff management and development to meet the requirements of the transformed organisation. Ivan has a particularly good personnel management style, patient, consistent and encouraging. He has developed a happy, highly competent staff who serve the Society with exemplary professionalism.
- Maintaining good working relations with all Branches and Sectors and their staff. This facilitated Branch and Sector

contributions of time, financial and professional support in attaining certain goals in the national interest. e.g. establishment of YPG, FPE, etc.

- Ivan has been pivotal in assisting all Branches and Sectors in their own growth and development, as well as providing unstinted support in times of crisis.
- Ivan also had the insight to include others in the PSSA's work in the best interests of the profession. For example, he was the driving force behind organising the Community Pharmacy Legal Trust, the Pharmacy Stakeholders Forum and the work done in providing input to the Pricing Committee.

The enormity of the task of transforming and developing the Society must not be underestimated. This has been achieved largely through Ivan's management and hard work with the support of his committees. The Committee members and various leaders themselves have benefitted from his expertise, wisdom, and assistance in fulfilling their duties, a fact to which many would testify.

Ivan has served the profession for more than 40 years, and the PSSA in particular, for 30 years since his appointment as Director in 1994. He has done so with dignity, integrity, and exemplary diligence, always using his vast knowledge, experience, and insight into all laws pertaining to pharmacy to the fullest extent in the best interests of the profession.

Welcoming Refiloe Mogale

The Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA) is excited to announce the appointment of Ms Refiloe Mogale as the new Executive Director effective 01 February 2024.

Refiloe has served as the Pharmaceutical Services Manager in the Nkangala District under the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Health since 2011.



She graduated with a BPharm degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, Gauteng, in 1997. In addition to her BPharm degree, Ms Mogale holds a Master's in Business Leadership (MBL) from UNISA and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health (Cum Laude) from the University of Pretoria. She has also completed additional courses, including the Advanced Health Management Programme (Cum Laude) and Advanced Programme in Sourcing and Supply Chain Management (Cum Laude).

Refiloe previously served as the Deputy President of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA) and President of the South African Association of Hospital and Institutional

Pharmacists (SAAHIP), so she understands the role and importance of a professional association.

During Refiloe's terms as SAAHIP President and PSSA Deputy President, she has provided ongoing support to branches and individuals. She has been able to recognise development areas in others and facilitate personal development through mentoring and coaching. She knows the South African system for pharmaceutical contracts, essential medicines list and its associated impact.

Refiloe has sound knowledge and understanding of the pharmaceutical legislative framework. She has regularly been involved in teamwork and conflict resolution, and she is able to cooperate with others to work towards a common goal.

She has done project management and policy implementation and has implemented many departmental and pharmaceutical policies. She is performance-driven and strives to provide value-added services and has participated in various services meant to improve systems and processes to facilitate continuous improvement.

The PSSA knows it is in excellent hands and that, under Refiloe's leadership, it will spearhead the profession into the future as a unified body.

82nd World Congress on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Cape Town, South Africa 1 to 4 September 2024

Understanding the Congress academic programme

The Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA) is the congress partner for the 82nd International Pharmaceutical Federation's (FIP) World Congress on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. The Congress will take place in Cape Town, South Africa, from 1-4 September 2024 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC).

Attending the annual FIP World Congress is indeed a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Due to the financial commitment of travelling abroad, not many South Africans have been able to utilise the opportunity of attending this global event. Bringing the FIP World Congress to South Africa is the most accessible opportunity for South African pharmacists and pharmacist's assistants to learn from and network with global experts.

Theme of the Congress

The 2024 FIP World Congress theme is **Innovating for the future of healthcare**.

Advancements in technologies, data analytics, practice settings, and collaborations are unavoidable, and innovation in healthcare holds the promise of revolutionising how we prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases. Change is inevitable. Change will not wait until you are comfortable to embrace it. Change is the only constant.

As pharmacists, we are used to changes in our everyday professional (and personal) lives. Changes to the scheduling status of medicines, legislation, minimum standards, formularies, standard operating procedures, and new product launches. Pharmacists play a pivotal role in driving healthcare innovation across all settings.

Our expertise in being the custodians of medication (which derives from our strong pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, and pharmaceutical chemistry foundation), accessibility to patients, medication review responsibilities, collaborative nature, participation in public health advancements, technology adoption and contributions to continuity of care, highlight our indispensable position in the health sector.

Pharmacists are faced with many innovations in healthcare these days.

Precision medicine aims to tailor treatments to individual patients based on their unique genetic makeup, lifestyle, and environmental factors. Based on the rapid advances in genomics and molecular biology, healthcare workers can provide targeted interventions with great success and reduced side effect profiles.

Although often feared, it is the reality that artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are revolutionising health care in many ways, such as augmenting diagnostic accuracy, predicting disease outcomes, and optimising treatment plans. Continuous collection of patient data is analysed to identify patterns and assist healthcare professionals, researchers and policymakers with decision-making regarding population health management, disease surveillance and public health planning.

In the post-COVID-19 era, telemedicine (also telepharmacy and remote patient monitoring) has emerged exponentially as a transformative innovation in how pharmacists could treat patients, resulting in expanded healthcare services to underserved locations and improving accessibility and patient convenience as more and more healthcare professionals offer virtual consultations. Wearable devices and remote monitoring tools assist healthcare professionals with early interventions and improved disease management through continuous health monitoring.

Over the three days of academic programming (Monday, 2 September to Wednesday, 4 September 2024), every day will focus on a specific sub-theme which supports the main Congress theme.

Sub-theme 1: In the ever-evolving healthcare landscape, the imperative goal of achieving **equitable quality healthcare** goes beyond geographical and socio-economic divides. At the heart of this transformation lies collaboration among healthcare providers, policymakers and pharmacists who unite to reshape the healthcare narrative with humanity. Pharmacists leverage their knowledge to shift from a one-size-fits-all approach to person-centred care, creating tailored solutions for individuals. Integrated care is championed, turning primary healthcare centres into hubs of holistic care. This congress track explores the crucial role of pharmacy in collaborating with diverse stakeholders, forming partnerships, and embracing new roles to advance universal health coverage with meaningful outcomes.

Sub-theme 2: Because innovation is revolutionising health care, a congress track that explores the role of pharmacists in the era of **innovative drug discovery and access** is a priority. Scientific breakthroughs drive transformation, with pharmaceutical research and biotechnology advancements paving the way for cutting-edge therapies. Digitalisation has permeated the pharmaceutical industry, revolutionising the distribution and logistics of medicines. Digital health technologies are pivotal in drug development, utilising real-world data and digital tools to inform every process stage. In this era of innovation, pharmacists play a central role in co-creating health care through our expertise in pharmaco-economics, global partnerships, and open-access

Programme outline

| | SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 | MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2024 | TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2024 | WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2024 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Early morning | - | Industry breakfast symposia | Industry breakfast symposia | Industry breakfast symposia |
| Morning | Workshops & Pharmacy in South Africa | Plenary session & Parallel sessions | Plenary session & Parallel sessions | Plenary session & Parallel sessions |
| Lunch | Industry lunch symposia | Industry lunch symposia | Industry lunch symposia | Industry lunch symposia |
| Afternoon | Opening Ceremony | Plenary session & Parallel sessions | Plenary session & Parallel sessions | Plenary session |
| Evening | Welcome Reception | Section & SIG dinners | ECPG evening | Closing dinner |

Figure 1

drug research, making them invaluable contributors to the industry.

Sub-theme 3: A **healthcare revolution through AI** and machine learning aims to co-create superior healthcare ecosystems in which pharmacists play a pivotal role. Predictive analytics take centre stage, offering personalised guidance based on genetic makeup, lifestyle, and medical history. This proactive healthcare approach empowers individuals to take control of their well-being. AI accelerates drug development and facilitates precision medicines by decoding diseases at the molecular level. This collaboration represents a synergy between human innovation, AI and healthcare professionals, ushering in a new era of medicine.

Draft programme

To date, only the Congress theme has been announced. The morning and afternoon plenary sessions will develop from the abovementioned theme and sub-themes.

FIP structures had the opportunity to submit session proposals based on the Congress theme and sub-themes by early January 2024. The Congress Programme Development Group (CPDG) reviewed and evaluated all the submissions received based on criteria that include collaboration between FIP structures, global representation and relevance, and alignment with the Congress theme.

Several parallel sessions will run during the late morning and early afternoon of each congress day, allowing delegates a variety of interesting topics to choose from. In this way, no delegate is forced to sit through a session not ideally aligned with their interest or line of work.

A chairperson or persons facilitate each session, and based on the interactive format of the session, it could have two to three expert speakers or a panel of experts who will delve into the session topic. Each session includes an opportunity for congress delegates (you) to participate in the discussion through a workshop, round-table discussions, or a question-and-answer session towards the end.

Session proposers identify speakers as part of the session proposal process based on the proposed speaker's leadership in their respective fields of excellence. Alternatively, speakers could be identified through the abstracts submitted by interested researchers that align with proposed session objectives and outcomes.

If one is not interested in a podium presentation, authors of an abstract may also indicate to submit the abstract for a poster presentation, which will be displayed in the Exhibition area during the Congress. During the day, but especially during the two-hour lunch break, delegates can walk through the poster boards and engage with authors on their research and projects. It is a great opportunity to network and establish collaborative relationships.

The Congress programme with session information will be available at the end of April 2024 on the Congress website at <https://capetown2024.fip.org/programme-per-day-outline/>.

Figure 1 indicates a simplistic outline of the Congress programme.

Important date

Early bird registration fee is only valid until 31 May 2024, thereafter the registration fee increases.

Refer to the FIP Congress newsletter distributed by PSSA on 15 January 2024 for more information on registering as South African participants through the unique registration link.

Enquiries

For more information or clarity regarding the 2024 FIP World Congress, send an email to Mariet at mariet@pssa.org.za or call 012 4709560.

All registration queries should be directed to FIP at congress@fip.org.

Visit the official Congress website for more information: <https://capetown2024.fip.org/>

Feedback on the 2024 Annual Cycle of Pharmaceutical Community Service

As in previous years, it was a privilege for PSSA to serve its members and support them during the Pharmaceutical Community Services process during the second half of 2023.

For many interns, applying for and being allocated to a community service post is filled with uncertainty and fear. In an attempt not only to serve our intern members better, but also to support the National Department of Health (NDoH) and the Intern and Community Service Programme (ICSP) more effectively, PSSA navigates the way for intern members with accurate and reliable information which aims to bring some sense of certainty and to reduce stress and anxiety.

As of 2022, PSSA commenced with communication to all intern members regarding Pharmaceutical Community Service long before the ICSP made any national announcements. The first email communication to intern members went out in June 2023, informing members that PSSA will support them when applying for community service. Members were further advised on what they can do to prepare for the commencement of the process, e.g. ensure their personal details are updated with SAPC and that their membership is paid to continue to receive support from PSSA.

Members were also advised that interns should focus on completing their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) entries successfully and as soon as possible. In 2022, for the first time, a situation occurred where some interns were not competent in all six CPD entries by the time the October pre-registration exam was written. These interns were not allowed to write the exam, which resulted in them having to remain interns and attempt the pre-registration exam in March 2023. The dilemma with this scenario was that these interns extended their internship beyond the minimum of 365 days to almost 15 months, some without remuneration for the time period beyond the original contract period and were then not eligible for placements as community service pharmacists (CSPs) as they could only commence with duty in April 2023. At that stage, placements took place based on the availability of posts.

The ICSP held its first stakeholder meeting with Associations on Tuesday, 19 September 2023. By this time in 2022, applications for community service had already opened. Behind the scenes, stakeholders shared communication on social media from the National Treasury to Provincial Treasuries of cost containment measures to assist the National Departments, public entities, and provinces in closing fiscal gaps, informing provinces that the Cabinet approved freezing the hiring of new employees. The Department assured stakeholders that community service would proceed as soon as possible, that a new service provider was appointed to manage the application and allocation process,

and that the website portals would be up and running within two weeks.

Although realised at the time, little did we understand just how delayed the process for the 2024 annual cycle would be.

The initial project plan stipulated that applications would be open during the first 3 weeks of October 2023, followed by the release of preliminary allocations by the end of October 2023. Applicants who are satisfied with their allocation could proceed with contracting and registration. In contrast, those who wanted to exchange or appeal their allocation would be allowed to do so during November 2023. All allocations were anticipated to be concluded by the end of November 2023.

PSSA, at the time, expressed its concern that a final deadline of 30 November 2023 to conclude the allocation process is very late in the year, given that this is just for the allocation and that the full employment process with the province must still follow from here. Considering the festive season approaching, provincial human resource departments would have to employ about 11 000 health care professionals in less than three weeks. Interns need the employment contract to register with SAPC as CSPs before they may commence duty on 1 January 2024. Applicants must also have a reasonable opportunity to manage their personal affairs for relocation if needed. The Department assured PSSA and stakeholders that the process would be done in time to allow for the provincial employment process to follow in time.

PSSA further confirmed with ICSP that the posts advertised to applicants will clearly state the commencement date so that candidates can take this into consideration and apply for posts in line with their internship completion date. During previous years, applicants applied for posts only to find out after allocation that the specific post was unavailable on 1 January and that the start date was only in March or April. This inconvenience left applicants without income for a month or three or ended up on the waiting list without a placement, as all available posts had already been allocated.

Applications opened, as planned, during the first week of October 2023. Applicants had to choose five facilities from three provinces from the list of posts. Three or more facilities should be classified as rural, two or fewer should be semi-urban, and a maximum of one may be in an urban area. Bursary holders, on the other hand, should select all five choices from the provinces where the bursary is from.

Applicants who applied for special considerations had to collect the requested supporting documentation and obtain affidavits from certain authorities. Special considerations were only available for scenarios applicable to the applicant's own health, if

the applicant is pregnant, has children in school or has a spouse (not partner) already employed in government or vested in permanent employment.

Applicants then applied on a web-based application form, as the service provider appointed to provide the software to the system could not deliver it in time. The implication was that no “login” details could be created for applicants to create a profile. During the 2023 annual cycle application process, PSSA reported that more than 10% of members had difficulty receiving their login details from ICSP during September 2022, resulting in them not being able to access the platform to apply for community service (read PSSA Perspectives SAPJ 90(1):9-11).

The first hiccup was when some provinces changed the priority level of some facilities after the application process had opened and the list of facilities had been published. The implication of this change (which should have been finalised before the commencement of application) was that some applicants were no longer within the prescribed ratio of choices per rural, semi-rural and urban areas. Because the application process was web-based, applicants couldn't change existing applications; they had to submit a new application with their amended choices. This administrative process resulted in many applicants submitting more than one application, and it took the ICSP team weeks to work through all applications manually and only keep the latest application of an applicant. In fact, more than 47 000 applications were received from 10 461 applicants.

Apart from the administrative challenge with duplicate applications, data quality was sub-standard. Applicants did not follow the application rules, selected the incorrect field of study or category between applying for an internship or community service placement, or made mistakes when entering data.

Although the initial project plan stated that preliminary allocations would be available at the end of October 2023, pharmacy applicants only received their allocations via SMS on 30 November 2023. Of the 943 applications received from pharmacist interns, only 755 were allocated, as 188 applicants were not marked as eligible by SAPC. Reasons for this could be related to the outstanding pre-registration exam, as explained earlier, or awaiting results of master's degree studies (academic internship).

Applicants who were placed outside of their five choices (only about 30% of applicants) were allowed to participate in the swop process, which took place during the first week of December 2023. The swop process allows applicants already allocated to exchange with applicants in similar professions upon mutual agreement. This may be across provincial borders. Unfortunately, the ICSP decided to hold back on emailing all allocation letters, even the 70% of applicants not allowed to participate in the swop process, until the swop process had concluded. The PSSA did not understand this decision and mentioned to ICSP that 70% of applicants who were placed at one of the choices (and who were not eligible to participate in the swop process) could have commenced with the employment process and registration with SAPC had they

received their allocation letter via email as stated in the SMS on 30 November 2023.

The swop process was further delayed because swop applications had to be signed off by provincial coordinators of the provinces involved. Many applicants had difficulty reaching the provincial coordinators or receiving feedback on their applications, delaying the process even further. Applicants finally received their allocation letter via email on 19 December 2023, 12 days before they were expected to commence with duty as CSPs and three days before the annual festive break in South Africa.

Based on the size of ‘enquiry tsunamis’ that PSSA received in the past regarding community service, not many members experienced delays with their employment and registration processes. However, new hiccups were experienced during this cycle:

- Although the ICSP confirmed that all eligible applicants were placed for community service, a few PSSA members informed the National Office that they had not received any allocation information. PSSA supported these members in obtaining outstanding allocation letters or being placed and commencing with duty on the first available date.
- Members informed the PSSA that one particular district, which advertised 12 posts for Pharmaceutical Community Service to commence on 1 January 2024, informed the applicants on Friday, 29 December 2023, that the district did not have any budget to employ them and that they do not have to report for duty on Tuesday 2 January 2024. PSSA engaged with provincial coordinators up to the DDG level to find solutions, speed up the process and enable communication between stakeholders to reallocate the applicants to other districts in the province. All members who requested PSSA's help were reallocated and contracted to commence with duty as agreed on.
- Members informed the PSSA that at a specific Community Health Centre in one of the provinces, five posts to commence on 1 January 2024 were withdrawn as these posts were now only available later in the year, around August 2024. These unexpected but potentially preventable changes resulted in members being without an income and incurring potential additional expenses to relocate once more to another location. At the time of publication, one member was still waiting for reallocation.
- PSSA were approached by members who had been placed at correctional services facilities but could not receive their contracts as due to outstanding fees at the university, they did not receive their BPharm degree certificate. The university, however, issued a statement of degree and letter of completion to confirm that the requirements for the degree had been met, and that these colleagues were able to complete their internship. The vetting process with correctional services is more intense than for other community service posts. At the time of publication, this issue had not yet been resolved.

Conclusion

As expected at the beginning of the project, the timelines were too narrow. The NDoH and ICSP are quick to caution applicants to “not make any irreversible decisions based on the allocation letter” and in the absence of a signed employment contract. But when applicants only receive their allocations at the end of November, it is not fair for the NDoH or ICSP to continue with this caution message, as applicants were left with very little time to make personal decisions regarding relocation, rental agreements, furniture removal, etc. It is unreasonable to expect applicants of the 2024 annual cycle to wait until they receive a signed employment contract in the last week of December to find accommodation at a new location, and give notice to existing rental agreements at the current internship location.

Going forward, PSSA will continue to remind ICSP that the employment conditions stated during the application process for community service will be seen as the first details applicable to the employment contract and that provinces will be held liable where employment conditions are changed after allocations have been released to applicants.

PSSA encourage provincial coordinators to ensure that all conditions listed for a specific post, including requirements, priority level and commencement date, must be checked for correctness before listing the post to applicants, as they might

be held liable for unforeseen financial expenses on the side of applicants or administrative workload on the side of ICSP due to administrative negligence on the side of the province. PSSA also request provincial coordinators to ensure sufficient capacity and resources to engage with queries from applicants, whether during the application, swop, or employment processes.

The ticket system, implemented in late 2023, works well. PSSA found that members could easily mail their concerns to the dedicated email address, including any additional email address in the cc field, who all then receive updates on this specific ticket number. This allowed for similar cases/issues to be added to existing ticket numbers and ensured a proper email trail of communication. PSSA also conveyed their satisfaction to ICSP during a stakeholder meeting in January 2024.

The PSSA would like to thank the SAPC staff who were on duty despite the festive season and closing of SAPC offices to support interns with their registration as CSPs and to enable commencement on 1 January 2024. Their efforts and time are appreciated.

The PSSA will continue to support the unplaced candidates as they complete their internship and become eligible for placement. The process will depend on the availability of posts at ICSP. The mid-year cycle will open later this year for commencement of duty on 1 July 2024.