



PSSA Perspectives

Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa

PSSA AGM

The PSSA AGM was held virtually on 10 June 2024.

Elections

At the AGM a new PSSA Executive Committee for the 2024/2025 year was elected. Congratulations to all members that were elected! The Exco has representatives from all 4 sectors and all branches, so if you would like to find out more or get more involved contact your Exco representative.

Presidential Committee

President	Tshifhiwa Rabali
Deputy President	Renier Coetzee
Honorary Treasurer	Lynette Terblanche
Immediate Past President	Joggie Hattingh
Vice-President: APSSA	Lorraine Thom
Vice-President: SAACP	Johannes Ravele
Vice-President: SAAHIP	Nhlanhla Mafarafara
Vice-President: SAAPI	Ingrid Duvenhage

Branch representatives

Border and Eastern Districts	Lwanda Mkhatshane
Cape Midlands	Alice Lategan
Cape Western Province	Ronel Boshoff, Jameel Kariem, Brent Sin-Hidge, Alex Wehmeyer
Free State	Martlie Mocke-Richter
KwaZulu-Natal Coastal	Mahendra Naidoo, Varsha Bangalee
KwaZulu-Natal Inland	Azraa Bassa
Limpopo	Mohale Seepe
Mpumalanga	Vacant
Northern Cape	Vacant
North West	Vacant
Pretoria	Byron Chukwu, Murial Kopanye

Southern Gauteng	Rashmi Gosai, James Meakings, Thanushya Pillaye
Vaal Triangle	Vacant
Ordinary members	Sham Moodley (KZN Coastal Branch) Ntombizodwa Luwaca (Border & Eastern Districts Branch) Seshnee Moodley (Border & Eastern Districts Branch)

Fellowship

Fellowship of the Society is to recognise those members who have consistently served to promote the profession and have significantly furthered the aims/objectives of the PSSA during his/her membership in exceptional ways at Branch, Sector and/or National Level over a significant number of years.

This year Fellowship of the PSSA was conferred on Refiloe Mogale and Dr Martlie Mocke-Richter.

Honorary Life Membership

Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on Ivan Kotzé.

Motivation received

Before his appointment as Executive Director of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa 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 both locally and abroad, giving him a deep understanding and insight into the application of medicine law. Amongst others, he represented the SA Government at a number of 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 Pharmacy Council, HPCSA, and Department of Health all underwent transformation. This required the forging of new working relationships and insight into development of new laws and standards pertaining to pharmacy practice. Ivan's experience and input largely ensured that the best interests of 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 particular challenges such as the introduction of lay ownership, new pricing regulations, and introduction of PAs, 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) in, for example, its representations to the Competition Commission. Particularly noteworthy, is the fact that the very wording in Hansard of the conditions of open ownership as accepted by Parliament, are those used by Ivan in the PSSA submission on the topic.

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.

All these submissions and negotiations were characterised by Ivan's insight, patience, and sound legal argument. 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 had been invited to serve on the then MCC Veterinary Committee and been appointed by the Minister of Health to serve as a member on 22 Appeal committees in terms of Section 24 of the Medicines Act, Act 101 of 1965.

Ivan's expertise and leadership has 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 a number of years on the PPS Insurance Company as well as 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 as President of the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA) in 2007 and served two terms for a period of four years. He also served as a Trustee for the CPA for a number of years. In recognition of his valuable contribution to the CPA he was honoured with Fellowship of the CPA in July 2017.

Ivan 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.

At the time of Ivan taking over as Director of the PSSA, the Society was in dire need of transformation. The Society had sold Medi-Kredit, so future income would rely solely on membership fees and investments. Up until then, much committee time and effort

was taken up with the business of Medi-Kredit. 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 of a new inclusive Constitution which provides for all Sectors and Branches.
- Restructuring of the budget, developing new improved services (e.g. PI) and additional income streams and exercising strict budgetary control. He leaves the Society with a healthy share portfolio, property investment and steady income growth.
- Developing a new Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals.
- Forging and maintaining good working relationships with SAPC and 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.
- Forging a good business relationship with Pretoria Branch to become co-owners of a new office and conferencing complex suitable for the needs of the Society.
- 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 the organising of 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 the management and hard work of Ivan 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.

Over the years Ivan has received the following awards:

- Fellowship of the PSSA
- Elected to the Senate of the Pretoria Branch of the PSSA
- The Ilse Snyman Memorial award from the Mpumalanga Branch of the PSSA

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 putting his vast knowledge, experience and insight into all laws pertaining to pharmacy, to full use in the best interests of the profession. Ivan richly deserves to be an Honorary Life Member of the Society in recognition of his distinguished service to the profession and his unprecedented diligence in developing and promoting the objects of the Society.



(L-R) Refiloe Mogale (PSSA Executive Director), Ivan Kotzé receiving his HLM certificate from Tshifhiwa Rabali (PSSA President)

PSSA Activities

Community service

The community service application and allocation process faced several challenges, including delayed timelines and administrative hurdles. As per norm, PSSA expressed concerns about the tight deadline for concluding the allocation process by 30 November 2023, highlighting the challenges of completing full employment processes during the festive season. The Department assured the PSSA and other stakeholders that the process would be completed in time for the commencement of duties on 1 January 2024. Furthermore, the PSSA confirmed with ICSP that advertised posts would clearly state their commencement dates, preventing applicants from facing unexpected delays and financial hardships due to posts being unavailable at the expected times. PSSA reported and addressed the issue where over 10% of members faced difficulties receiving their login details from ICSP during September 2022, which hindered their ability to apply for community service. Based on the number of queries we processed in the past, minimal setbacks were experienced in 2023. PSSA proactively voiced concerns when the preliminary allocations were delayed and worked with ICSP to ensure that allocations were communicated effectively to applicants. Numerous interventions were implemented with the intention of assisting our members, and these included:

- obtaining allocation letters for the unallocated members and ensuring they could commence their duties on the first available date.
- handling post application changes such as successfully engaging with provincial coordinators and high-level officials to reallocate applicants who were left without placements due to budget constraints or post availability issues.
- addressing unexpected changes, such as posts being withdrawn or delayed by working with affected members to find solutions and ensure they had placements and contracts.

- assisting members placed at correctional services facilities who could not receive their contracts due to unavailability of their degree certificates as required by the vetting process, by working with universities and correctional services to resolve the issue.

The PSSA requested a meeting with the Director-General of Health to discuss the challenges and experiences faced by applicants. This led to acknowledged concerns and planned interventions for mid-cycle and future cycles. Overall, PSSA's proactive engagement, advocacy, and support for its members ensured smoother application and allocation processes, mitigating delays and administrative challenges.

Codeine Care Initiative (CCI)

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) together with key stakeholders including the PSSA, South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC), South African Nursing Council (SANC), and the civil society forum of the SA National AIDS Council (SANAC), is spearheading an initiative to mitigate the risk of overuse, misuse, and abuse of codeine-containing medicines in South Africa.

This comprehensive strategy and collaborative effort of the CCI showcase a commitment to safeguarding public health and ensuring a responsible supply chain for codeine-containing medicines. The initiative aims to collect data at every point within the supply chain, enforce participation through legislation, and promote public education on the dangers of codeine abuse. The key drivers of this initiative include the reviewing of legislation to enforce mandatory participation by all stakeholders, leveraging the Medicines and Related Substances Act to require necessary information by SAHPRA, plans to develop an industry-specific code to access patient data while complying with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), public education on the

dangers of codeine and establishing a whistleblower line to report transgressions, developing minimum standards for the supply of medicines with potential for misuse, which is above the current minimum standard for Pharmacist Initiative Therapy (PIT), extending its reach to include wholesalers and the development of webinar series aimed at healthcare professionals and the public covering topics from pharmacology to legislation and the role of codeine in pharmaceutical care.

Small branches projects

During the 2022/2023 financial year the PSSA initiated a new project allowing branches with less than 500 members to apply for funding for projects they wanted to complete in their branch to benefit the majority of the branch members. The Presidential Committee was granted the authority to review the applications and grant approval for the projects.

For the 2022/2023 financial year, three applications received were successful with two projects completed before the end of the financial year. The Cape Midlands Branch held a symposium for pharmacist's assistants that was a great success, and the assistants have asked that the symposium be held again.

The Border and Eastern Districts Branch created a podcast that was launched recently, and the funding was used for the editing of material recorded for the podcast. The branch also planned a research day which could not be finalised before the end of the financial year and was thus rescheduled for the current financial year.

For the 2023/2024 financial year the PSSA received four applications, and all were granted. Once the projects have been completed, reports will be shared to encourage other branches to emulate successful projects.

Responsible pharmacists

Earlier this year, the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC) published two sets of board notices (BN) related to Responsible Pharmacists (RP) for public comment, sparking considerable controversy. The first notice, BN514 of 2023, issued on 24 November 2023, detailed the criteria for accrediting a generic short course for pharmacists seeking registration as Responsible Pharmacists. The second notice, BN543 of 2024, published on 2 February 2024, outlined the criteria for registering as an RP. These notices introduced a new requirement mandating pharmacists to complete a short course to qualify for RP registration. This proposal faced widespread objections from the pharmacy profession, including the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA).

The PSSA argued that the Council is not authorised by primary legislation to publish regulations and that any changes to the registration requirements for RPs must be enacted through regulations issued by the Minister of Health. In our submission, we acknowledged the significant responsibilities carried by RPs and noted that pharmacists are not always fully aware of these obligations. We proposed that the SAPC develop a

set of guidelines to support the professional development of pharmacists, particularly young pharmacists, regarding the duties and requirements of an RP. We also suggested that this training be offered in the form of workshops tailored to the prospective RP's level of experience and practice setting, rather than as a formal short course, to ensure a more flexible and relevant approach as it cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach.

Mid-level workers

On 19 April 2024, the long-awaited amendment to the regulations relating to the registration of persons and maintenance of registers and the amendment detailing the scope of practice for pharmacy technicians and the updated role of pharmacist's assistants were published. While these amendments represent significant progress, incorporating pharmacy technicians as mid-level workers into practice will be a lengthy process with implications yet to be fully established which may include challenges such as overlapping responsibilities and limited career pathing opportunities. Additionally, there are ongoing consultations within the HRH department and with stakeholders regarding the amendments to these regulations. Now we wait in anticipation for the publication of the amendments to the regulations making provision for specific categories for existing specialist pharmacists and new categories of specialist pharmacists and the scopes of practice of specialist pharmacists.

Pharmacy museum

Following the sale of the Southern Gauteng property at 52 Glenhove Road, the museum was relocated to the Aspen Healthcare Park in Woodmead. The PSSA expresses its gratitude to Aspen for generously offering to host the museum. The Pharmacy Museum is now registered as a Section 21 company, with a board of directors consisting of appointees from both Aspen and the PSSA. The PSSA National Office has assumed responsibility for the museum, including insurance and other administrative matters. The PSSA also extends heartfelt thanks to Lynette Terblanche for her dedicated efforts in packing, moving, and setting up the museum at Aspen, as well as for serving as its curator. The museum is now open to visitors free of charge, with prospects of an official launch before the end of the year.

Legacy projects

With anticipation building for the FIP World Congress 2024 in Cape Town, FIP invited the PSSA to identify legacy projects that will have a lasting impact beyond the conference. The PSSA has proposed three projects, all of which have received FIP's support and approval from the PSSA NEC.

The first project is the PSSA partnering with FIP and the CTICC on a community project to support a community organisation including Ikhaya lethemba. With this partnership, PSSA, FIP and the CTICC aim to collect books, stationery, clothes, blankets, toys, and non-perishable foods for the most vulnerable communities. The partnership was announced on Mandela Day on 18 July 2024.

The second project is the Medicines to Africa initiative which is a crowdfunding project developed in partnership with Pharmacists without Borders and FIP. This initiative aims to collaborate with a charity organisation dedicated to humanitarian causes, providing crucial assistance in the event of natural or other disasters affecting countries across the African continent. The third project is on the

Basel Statements, a high-level foresight on the future of hospital pharmacy. The project aims to compare the statements with the GPP, ideal clinic and hospital frameworks, assess pharmacy operations utilising the Basel statements toolkit and finally promoting the Basel statements to all stakeholders. This project has a potential for international reach.

The PSSA/Alpha Pharm distance learning programme 2024

The PSSA/Alpha Pharm distance learning programme continues to offer pharmacists useful, practical, up-to-date information that enables them to provide optimal pharmaceutical care to their patients.

Module 3, 2024 – Immune Support

A healthy immune system is needed to fight infection, prevent disease, and maintain overall well-being. Lifestyle factors like diet, exercise and stress levels influence immune function. The use of immune-supporting supplements has increased significantly in the last few years, particularly since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dietary supplements are not meant to treat, cure, or prevent diseases; but are intended to add to or “supplement” a healthy diet. Immune-supporting supplements can contain a vast array of ingredients, ranging from vitamins and minerals to herbal compounds. When used in the correct circumstances, immune-

supporting supplements are beneficial for health and immunity. It is important for the community pharmacist to discern when an immune-supporting supplement may benefit a customer.

Pharmacists should familiarise themselves with the most common ingredients found in immune supplements and how they function within the body. Furthermore, identifying which groups of people are vulnerable to immune impairment is key to advising on suitable products.

As a pharmacist, it's important to discern which supplements are safe to recommend and may offer genuine benefits to individuals and when to approach supplementation with caution.

For more information about this programme, contact Gill or Glynis at Insight Medicine Information on 011 706 6939 or email: cpdalphapharm@insightmed.co.za.

The PSSA/Alpha Pharm clinical education programme 2024 for pharmacy staff

The PSSA/Alpha Pharm pharmacy staff clinical education programme continues to offer front-shop assistants or pharmacists' assistants up-to-date information that enables them to provide optimal pharmaceutical care to their patients. All pharmacy staff need to be familiar with the use of unscheduled medicines and should be reminded of when it is necessary to refer the patient to the pharmacist.

Module 3, 2024 – Immune Support

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but can add to or “supplement” a healthy diet. Immune supplements contain a variety of ingredients, ranging from vitamins and minerals to herbs and spices. When used in the correct circumstances, immune-supporting supplements are beneficial for health and immunity. It is important for the front shop worker to understand the role of supplements in health and immunity.

Front shop workers should familiarise themselves with the most common ingredients found in immune supplements, how they function within the body and which population groups may benefit from supplementation.

If you would like to participate in the PSSA/Alpha Pharm pharmacy staff clinical education programme, please contact Gill or Glynis for further information on 011 706 6939 or email: cpdalphapharm@insightmed.co.za.