Highlights from the PSSA branches

Reports on recent branch activities are tabled at every meeting of the PSSA national executive committee by each of the PSSA branches. CPD events are not included in these highlights because the branches, recognising the importance of CPD, are active throughout the year.

**Border and Eastern Districts**

The branch has realised the importance of marketing the PSSA to non-members. One initiative to create awareness was the launch of branded clothing, such as golf shirts, body warmers and caps. The regional conference held in September was used to promote the profession during Pharmacy Week, while community and hospital pharmacists used the week for health promotion to the public.

An exciting recent event is that the branch was able to motivate and inspire pharmacists in the Mthatha region, where a Pharmacy Forum meeting, which is attended by a significant number of pharmacists, takes place monthly, assisted and supported by the PSSA Border and Eastern Districts branch.

**Cape Midlands**

Two important areas of concern were recently explored by the branch.

A branch representative attended a meeting arranged by the Department of Health to discuss the introduction of Chronic Medicine Distribution Points. It was stressed that use of these distribution points will be limited to patients whose conditions are stable because of chronic medication and not to those who need urgent medical attention. There is an opportunity for pharmacies to participate which will stand them in good stead when NHI is introduced.

A legal opinion was obtained from Advocate Elsabé Klinck on what is permissible when notifying fellow professionals about medicine abuse. Elsabé suggests that the best approach is to lobby for legislative change, so as to make the provisions of both the pharmacy regulations and the Medicines and Related Substances Act stricter, and to allow for specified disclosures under specific circumstances.

**Cape Western Province**

One of the most appreciated activities of the CWP branch is the assistance given by the Director, Gary Black, to PSSA members nationally. The most frequently asked questions involve practice and labour related issues.

Some of the labour related issues addressed recently were extended hours of work, retirement, locum employment agreements, disputes about reprimands, extended scope of practice, dangerous working conditions and annual leave.

**Free State**

The Free State branch is pleased to announce the recent formation of the FS Pharmacist’s Assistant division, spearheaded by Mr Lean Viljoen. The division is gaining a lot of strength and popularity amongst pharmacist’s assistants. The division has already organised its first successful CPD event aimed specifically at assistants.

The branch executive committee took a bold decision. Instead of holding a year end function this year, the money will either be used towards more CPD events during 2017, or to subsidise members’ attendance of a conference during 2017. The latter, in particular, will increase PSSA FS involvement on national level and will give opportunities to attend these conferences to pharmacists who are unable to participate due to financial constraints.

**KwaZulu-Natal Coastal**

The most prestigious event of the branch calendar is the presentation of the Brian Seymour Award. This year’s recipient is Elizna Schutte, who was nominated by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Interviewing the candidates nominated by the various pharmacy schools afforded the opportunity to inform these future leaders of the profession about the benefits of membership of the Society and the Young Pharmacists’ Group. It is interesting to note that the previous recipients of the award remain in contact with each other via social media.

The branch committee has taken the lead in addressing matters of concern that relate to the SA Pharmacy Council (SAPC). These include grading certificates, section 4(z)g of the Pharmacy Act, fines, pharmacy inspections, pharmacist representation on Council, SAPC registers, CPD, sale of personal details, notice of fee changes and the SAPC conference. Some of these issues will require changes to the Pharmacy Act, which will need both time and money.
Pretoria

The annual teambuilding event at the Musaiek Acrobranch challenged committee members mentally, physically and emotionally. It exploited the group’s strengths and weaknesses. Important lessons learned were that one must always remember the previous paths and that the shortest path to success is not always the right way.

A Drugwise workshop was held as a joint venture of the PSSA and SA Medical Association branches. Both pharmacists and doctors attended the workshop and are committed to making a difference in drug and substance abuse.

Pharmacy week was a huge success. The theme for Pharmacy Week was “Towards quality care together – use medicine safely”. Planning for September began early in 2016. All sectors of pharmacy were united in an outreach event at the Kingsley Shopping Centre. The active participation of pharmacy students from the Tshwane University of Technology was immense.

Southern Gauteng

The branch’s major thrust this year has been to explore NHI initiatives in order to assemble accurate information regarding the participation of pharmacists. The information will be made available to members nationally in order for them to make informed decisions about their own participation in NHI in their individual practice settings.

Mpumalanga

Please note: This branch report is presented as it was written in order to share not only the events but also the enthusiasm of the branch and its chairman, Francois van der Walt.


Soos gewoonlik het die Mpumalanga tak weer die spyker op sy kop geslaan en ‘n wonderlike CPD naweek aangebied. Ons beplan tans om ‘n soortgelyke naweek aan te bied tydens ons komende jaarvergadering in Februarie 2017 en wel in die suide van ons provinsie sodat ons lede aan hierdie kant van die wêreld ook ingelig kan word. “Drug Wise” is egter die antwoord vir aptekers, deur aptekers mbv aptekers. So ‘n stuk of tien van ons aptekers was die pas afgelope Saterdag en Sondag bevoorreg om net buite Mbombela (Nelspruit) te vertoef by ‘n knus klein bed-en-ontbyt pleknie met die naam Nou’s Toeka. Onder die bekwame leiding van David Bayever (wêreldkenner op die gebied van dwelmmisbruik) is ons “nà die lig geleë”, het ons ôe oopgegaan en sien ons kans vir die rol van die apteker in die multi-professionele taakspan om dwelmmisbruik hok te slaan. Moet egter nie nou al moed verloor nie…iemand anders gaan die skelms jaag en toesluit.

Kom vind gerus uit wat ons gehoor het en rus jouself toe vir ‘n probleem wat geen grense ken nie. Oud, jonk, man, vrou, Afrikaan, oosteling, wie ook al… is almal uitgelewer aan hierdie vloek in ons samelewing. David gaan dieselfde 6 uur lange kursus vir ons hier in die suide van Mpumalanga kom aanbied. Gideon sal binnekort begin om e-posse uit te stuur om die nodige reelings te tref.

Wat die pas afgelope konferensie in Durban aanbeveel, het Koos Snyman en Karin Grobler ons tak verteenwoordig. Die vrugte van die konferensie net goeie dinge vir ons professie bring. Congratulations to PSSA members

At the SAPC conference, awards honouring pharmacy excellence were given to pharmacists, pharmacy support personnel and pharmacy facilities in various categories. The PSSA Cape Western Province and Free State branches were well represented in the awards.

Pharmacist of the Year – community pharmacy
Blenn Eagar (FS)

Pharmacist of the Year – public institutional pharmacy
Carrie de Beer (CWP)

Pharmacist of the Year – private institutional pharmacy
Lorinda Cloete (FS)

Pharmacist of the Year – other
Prof Praneet Valodia (CWP)

Pharmacist’s Assistant of the Year
Maria Morongoenyane Zulu (FS)
The PSSA/Alpha Pharm distance learning programme 2016

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 5/2016 – Vaccine-Preventable Childhood Illnesses

The EPI-SA programme strives to reach every child with quality immunisation services that incorporate the use of new vaccines and technology and that ensure no child is denied his or her right to protection against vaccine-preventable diseases. This is, however, not without challenges. Despite the achievements of the programme, under-immunisation among children still remains a challenge in both the public and the private sector. Under-immunisation not only leads to increased risk for disease but also threatens the immunity thresholds needed to prevent the spread of vaccine-preventable infections.

It is critically important that the pharmacist be aware of the practicalities related to vaccines and immunisation, have solid knowledge of vaccine-preventable diseases and current immunisation schedules for children and adolescents and be in a position to advocate for the safety of vaccines and their health benefits. The pharmacist can play an important role in supporting and strengthening the national immunisation programme.

This module is intended to build on the pharmacist’s knowledge of common vaccine-preventable childhood infectious diseases, their clinical features, how they are spread or transmitted, the safety profile and the benefits of vaccines as well as the current vaccination schedules in both the public and private sector.

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 2016 for pharmacy staff

Recognising that consumers frequently encounter front-shop assistants or pharmacist’s assistants before they speak to the pharmacist, the PSSA and Alpha Pharm have launched a clinical education programme for pharmacy staff. 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 5/2016 – Vaccine-preventable childhood illnesses

Vaccines are important as they reduce the rate of illness and deaths related to vaccine-preventable illnesses.

Many children in South Africa have benefitted from the Expanded Programme on Immunisation launched in South Africa and the morbidity (rate of disease in the population) and mortality (death) from childhood infectious diseases has been improved. According to statistics from the national Department of Health, since the introduction of these vaccines, rates of diseases such as polio, measles, hepatitis B, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and meningitis caused by Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) have declined in some cases by up to 90%.

Vaccinating children against infectious childhood diseases not only gives the vaccinated child protection against the disease, it also provides protection for the communities in which they live. Pharmacy staff will be enabled to engage with parents and customers and dispel common myths about vaccination while presenting the true facts.

If you would like more information about this programme contact Gill or Glynis on 011 706 6939 or email cpdalphapharm@insightmed.co.za.
Welcoming new members

The Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA) welcomes the following pharmacists who joined the Society in August, September and October 2016. We trust that you will be welcomed into your branches and sectors, and that you will find great value in your membership.


Student members

We are also delighted to welcome the following student members:


In memoriam

The PSSA extends its sincere condolences to the family and friends of the following members who passed away in August, September and October 2016.

Hylton Leonard Abrams – Southern Gauteng Branch
Willem Ockert O’Kelly – Free State Branch
CHE Olivier – Southern Gauteng Branch
Mohamed Raffik Essop Seedat – Southern Gauteng Branch
Michael Skinner – Cape Midlands Branch