The professional benefit of membership of the PSSA

As pharmacy student members become pharmacist interns, they become paying members of PSSA. The fee for interns and community service pharmacists is reduced by 50% of the pharmacist membership fee to support these members with the transition into the profession. In the beginning of each year, the PSSA reviews the membership status of these members to monitor advancements to further professional designations. Once the team processes such changes, these intern members receive invoices for the pro rata membership fee payable. Statements are emailed monthly to those members who have not paid their membership fee. If PSSA membership fee is still unpaid by 31 August, these members are removed from the membership database.

Similar to the above process, with the change from student to intern, there is a change in the scope of practice that the person may participate in and as a result, the risk profile for indemnity insurance changes as well. Should a student not update their change in scope of practice with PSSA, it will impact possible claims against your indemnity insurance policy as you have then practiced at a higher scope (intern) than what your policy covers (still student).

PPS indemnity insurance is an exclusive benefit to PSSA paid up members only. Should your membership be cancelled due to non-payment, you will no longer qualify for indemnity insurance and your PPS indemnity insurance policy will not renew.

With the transition from intern to community service pharmacist (CPS), there is no financial implication for the membership fees or indemnity insurance premiums as interns and CPSs are covered within the same insurance risk category.

Lastly, once community service pharmacists complete the compulsory year, they are registered as pharmacists and commence employment at any employer of their choice. It is essential to inform the PSSA of the change in scope of practice and to ensure that your indemnity insurance cover is in-line with your current scope of practice. The membership status from there will remain pharmacist, regardless of the practice setting you work in, but your indemnity cover may vary between employers e.g. public / private sector. The rating table can be viewed on the PSSA website (https://www.pssa.org.za/professional-insurance.html).

Pharmacist’s assistant members

The PSSA constitution makes provision for pharmacist’s assistants as associate members of the PSSA. As a result, upon joining the PSSA, pharmacist’s assistants receive various member benefits to support them throughout their careers and professional interactions. According to Good Pharmacy Practice rules, it is compulsory for pharmacist’s assistants to have professional indemnity insurance in their personal capacity. PSSA together with iTOO provides reliable professional indemnity insurance cover for pharmacist’s assistants with affordable premiums. The indemnity form can be downloaded from the PSSA website.

Similar to pharmacists, pharmacist’s assistants have the following benefits:

- Professional indemnity insurance is cost-effective and comprehensive to suit a diversity of practice settings and levels of cover
- Continuing Professional Development through CPD evenings, online webinars, symposiums, workshops and conferences
- PSSA/Alpha Pharm distance learning programme, which covers five relevant diseases per year, is available at a reduced rate
- National promotion of the invaluable role of the pharmacist and pharmacy support personnel as part of the healthcare team to other health professionals and the public through initiatives such as Pharmacy Month and World Pharmacists Day
- Liaises on behalf of the profession with the government (National Department of Health, Heads of Pharmaceutical Services and the Minister of Health) and other health-related professions and councils (SAPC, BHF, SAHPRA, WHO and FIP)
- Interaction and benchmarking with colleagues in the same sector of the profession (academia, community, hospital and institutional, industry) or same geographical area (branch) and also exposure to other sectors of the profession through joint events
- Advice and support which is only a phone call or email away from various experienced staff of the Society
- Reliable information and relevant news communicated through:

...
- South African Pharmacist's Assistant Journal
- PSSA website
- Electronic newsletters
- Social media
- Professional legal services, including assistance with human resource-related issues through telephonic labour law advice and referral to suitable legal representation
- Books and reference publications are available at preferential rates to members. The PSSA Pharmacy Law Compendium, published by LexisNexis, is available to PSSA members at 10% discount
- Reviewing and addressing healthcare legislation such as the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act, Pharmacy Act, National Health Insurance, Medical Schemes Act, Dispensing fee, etc.
- International best practice guidelines are made available through membership of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA)
- Attend any meeting of the Society, Branch or Sectoral Division, or by invitation any Executive Meeting of the Branch or Sectoral Division Committee
- Take part in any discussion on any matter at a general or special meeting of the Branch or Sectoral Division

Associate members may not:
- vote on motions at a branch or sector meeting
- nominate and vote for members during a branch or sector meeting
- be nominated or appointed to any branch or sector committee, or be selected as Councillor to General Council at the PSSA AGM
- use the abbreviation MPS (member of the Pharmaceutical Society) as this is only for use by ordinary members

During the second half of 2023, the PSSA is planning to visit a number of Skills Development Providers to address their learners about PSSA and the benefits we offer. PSSA believes that we are stronger together and that all pharmacist’s assistants can benefit from becoming a PSSA member. For more information or to schedule a time with PSSA to address pharmacist’s assistants, contact Mariet at mariet@pssa.org.za.

Save the date

You are reminded to save the dates 1 to 5 September 2024, reserve a spare bedroom with family or friends, and book your flights to Cape Town to attend the 82nd FIP World Congress on Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Do not delay any bookings or budget prioritisation until it is too late. A short webinar series between October 2023 and February 2024 is planned to assist you with the necessary information you may need to attend this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities will be available soon and shared with all members.

For any other queries or more information, contact Mariet at mariet@pssa.org.za.

Save the date
The PSSA/Alpha Pharm distance learning programme 2023

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 – New updates on heart failure for the pharmacist

This module provides a broad overview of the latest approach to the treatment and management of chronic heart failure, which takes into account the important and beneficial effects of new classes of medication that have become available. Pharmacists need to acquaint themselves with these updated guidelines in order to be able to communicate with doctors about the latest treatment regimens and to refer patients timeously to minimise disease progression.

As a pharmacist, you are ideally positioned at the “heart” of patient care. Often being more accessible to patients than the doctor, many pharmacists have established relationships with their patients. In this position, you can contribute to heart failure care by helping to optimise treatment, advising patients about preventative care and non-pharmacological interventions, and referring patients to their doctor as appropriate.

It is also important for a pharmacist to check all medications prescribed for a patient and screen for any possible or potential drug interactions. This may occur when a new treatment is added to the patient’s regimen, in which case the prescribing doctor should be notified as appropriate. In addition, as a pharmacist, you can make patients aware regarding their use of over-the-counter medications, such as NSAIDs or any other medication that may interfere with their treatment for heart failure.

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 2023 for pharmacy staff

The PSSA/Alpha Pharm pharmacy staff clinical education programme continues to offer front-shop assistants or pharmacist’s 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, 2023 – Worm infestation

Most parasitic infestations are more common in tropical or subtropical areas and in rural or developing areas.

Parasitic worms have plagued humans since before our earliest recorded history. Infestation is most frequent in children and women. In pregnant women, worm infestation produces anaemia and the risk of bearing children with low birth weight. Children who are infested suffer from stunting of growth and impaired mental development due to poor absorption of nutrients and anaemia. This occurs because the worms feed on the host’s tissues, especially blood, leading to the loss of iron and proteins.

This module covers the more common parasitic worm infestations, the signs and symptoms of such infestations and their prevention and management.

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.