

# For the sake of the profession, we shall win!

SADJ May 2022, Vol. 77 No. 4 p 188-189

Dr Nthabiseng Metsing, Head: Professional Development, SADA

In this article, I reflect on the ineffectiveness of the HPCSA, focusing on their apparent absence to guide and serve the professions. I also report on the progression of the RVU, the SADA's submission on dental treatment under general anaesthetic for special-needs patients, the new terms for the Young Dentists Council (YDC), and that of the SADA National Council.

## HPCSA HAS FAILED DENTAL PRACTITIONERS.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, when the HPCSA, like other organizations, had remote-working personnel, the Association and many of its members have asked, "Where has the HPCSA gone?" It now seems that not only are HPCSA employees working remotely, but they have also vanished. Members are dissatisfied that telephone lines are not answered, or when they do get through, they are placed on hold for an extended period before the call is disconnected; repeated e-mails are sent but not responded to, and restoring the names of practitioners removed from the register is a losing battle. In utter exasperation, members seek aid from their organization, which encounters the same lack of service when acting on their behalf.

Numerous letters and e-mails are sent to specified persons, yet they are not even acknowledged, much less read. After it has been three years since the outbreak of the pandemic, it is difficult to see why the HPCSA cannot continue its duties like other South African organizations and entities. A regulator is responsible for several health care professions and, as a result, for practitioners whose livelihoods rely on their active registration, as well as for a variety of other matters.

It seems that the HPCSA continues to lack effective leadership and has continually failed to give adequate direction to health professionals on a variety of topics. Members are encouraged to submit their complaints to the President of the HPCSA, Professor Simon Nmutandani (HPCSA President), at [Simon.Nmutandani@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:Simon.Nmutandani@hpcsa.co.za) or Ms Melissa De Graaff (Acting CEO) at [Registrar@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:Registrar@hpcsa.co.za) and Mr Emmanuel Chanza, Manager of Professional Boards, at [emmanuelc@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:emmanuelc@hpcsa.co.za).

Not because of the rands and cents, but on principle, we consider it a huge win that we were able to battle the HPCSA to repeal the gazette announcing the higher annual registration fees. This has never happened before in the history of the HPCSA, and we feel that the fact that they were compelled to cut the fees will serve as a lesson for the institution to engage its stakeholders more thoroughly in the future.

In 2022, SADA will strongly pursue the discussion that should lead to the formation of a new regulator primarily responsible for dentists and physicians. As stakeholders of the HPCSA, the practitioners can no longer be disregarded. In this context,

SADA will continue its efforts to meet with the HPCSA and, if required, the Minister of Health.

## WHERE ARE WE WITH THE RVU NEGOTIATIONS?

There is little question that members are wondering why the SADA Relative Value Units (RVU) programme, which was introduced last year, has seemingly not resulted in improved payments for dental benefits. SADA has been interacting aggressively with schemes over the RVU information. Medical schemes are now analysing the data, and in certain instances, meetings with our consultants have been scheduled to discuss methodology, comprehension, outcomes, and other information. This will be a continual, though sluggish, procedure. Aside from RVU conversations, SADA often meets with schemes and administrators to address member difficulties, benefit anomalies, and code and descriptor interpretation concerns.

## SADA'S SUBMISSION ON DENTAL TREATMENT UNDER GENERAL ANAESTHETIC FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PATIENTS.

Members of the Dental Practice Committee observed that public oral health institutions were being swamped with requests for dental treatment to be performed under general anaesthesia for special needs patients, even though these patients were members of a medical scheme. This was due to the decline in authorization for these procedures by various medical schemes, generally due to the patient's age.

In response, SADA recently submitted a policy document that highlights the importance of treating special needs patients in a controlled and safe environment to both the BHF and HFA. We are pleased to report that to date, Profmed is the first to respond positively to this request and is in full support of implementing our guidelines with immediate effect. We are encouraged by this constructive feedback and remain optimistic that other schemes will follow suit as soon as possible.

We encourage members to always speak to us on matters like the above where we can take the course and address it to the relevant authorities.

## THE YDC COMMITTEE TERM HAS COME TO AN END – A NEW COMMITTEE IS TO BE INAUGURATED.

The term of the previous YDC leadership had expired, and we solicited candidates from young practitioners under the age of 35 who were willing to stand for election and serve the profession. The YDC is particularly committed to addressing difficulties, seizing opportunities, mentoring, and helping newcomer practitioners. The YDC exists to accommodate and assist these young practitioners whose perspectives

and approaches to challenges vary from their colleagues. With the new leadership, we anticipate interesting initiatives and prospects designed to meet their requirements. Young practitioners are also encouraged to get engaged in their branch committees, to ensure the future of the dental profession and your organization.

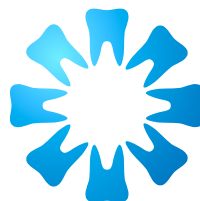
#### **A NEW TERM FOR SADA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR 2022.**

A new four-year term for the SADA National Council, which represents all SADA chapters, will shortly begin. Some branches have planned and organized members' meetings at which they will solicit volunteers to serve on branch

committees and maybe represent their branch on the National Council. They have the chance to raise concerns impacting grassroots members to a national audience at this meeting. Members are asked to keep an eye out for these days, and in most instances, these gatherings may also include an educational speaker.

Lastly, as SADA, we are confident that this year we will make inroads on many fronts for the benefit of the profession at large

**Yours in Dentistry**  
**KC Makhubele**



**SADA**  
THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
DENTAL ASSOCIATION

## **NOTICE OF AMENDMENT**

### **22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF**

### **The South African Dental Association NPC (“SADA”)**

An amended notice is hereby given that the 22nd Annual General Meeting of Members (AGM) of The South African Dental Association (SADA) NPC, will be held on Thursday 7 July 2022 at 18h00, which will be conducted virtually on this date through the Zoom virtual meeting platform. The Agenda together with supporting documents for the meeting will be sent electronically to members and posted on the SADA website.

Members are advised that they must have access to a computer or smart device or dial-up facility in order to join the online meeting. In view of extraordinary circumstances and to ensure maximum participation of voting members on resolutions tabled at an AGM, we call for the early return of proxies from members who are unable to attend.

Questions from members: We are also encouraging members to raise questions prior to the AGM, thereby allowing those not in attendance, the opportunity to raise issues which can then be dealt with at the AGM or referred to National Council meeting. The questions and answers covered in the AGM will, following the meeting, be published on the Association's website.

***SADA is your Association and your voice counts.***

**KC Makhubele**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**May 2022**