



OPTIFORUM

OPTIFORUM JANUARY TO JUNE 2024



SAOA

South African Optometrist Association

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FOREWORD

The Optiforum, published biannually, is to be regarded as an official mouthpiece of the SAOA, presented as a compendium of news, views, and reviews, which are relevant to the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry.

Importantly, the Optiforum is also made available to our partners and stakeholders with whom we regularly engage and whom we thank for their continued support.

MESSAGE FROM SAOA PRESIDENT

Greetings Colleagues,

2024 represents the 100-year anniversary of the SAOA, embracing the principle of having a tradition of excellence – and the force of the future. Indeed, the SAOA has, over the years, undergone a series of roller-coaster rides, but has weathered the storms, and, in 2024, thanks to our valued members and stakeholders, stands strong and steadfast, ready to negotiate the next one hundred years.

Indeed, as evidenced by the unexpected amendments to the ethical rules, published in November last year, and addressed elsewhere in this Optiforum, the fog of unpredictability does play havoc with planning. The term ‘permacrisis’ has been adopted by many world leaders, referring to a long and sustained period of confusion and difficulties, which describes the status of our planet at this time, characterized by (e.g.) wars, artificial intelligence, crime, corruption, and other forms of upheaval. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that optometry and dispensing opticianry will continue to be major forces within SA healthcare with a strong and supportive professional association.

I take this opportunity to extend our very best wishes to all our valued members, our stakeholders, partners, and families, in all areas of optometric endeavour, for a new year filled with good health and success – and look forward to meeting you, our valued members, at our Centennial Celebration Conference at Emperors Palace in July.

Best Regards,
Nivien Subramany



NIVIEN SUBRAMANY

SAOA President

“We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity, and its first chapter started in January 2024”

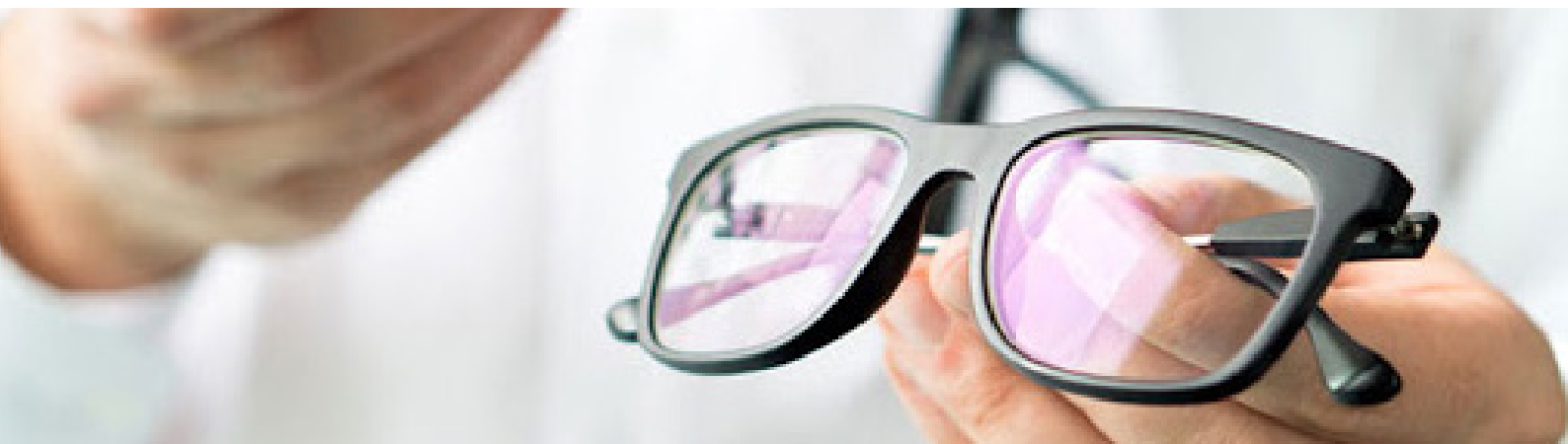
The door to 2024 has been met with continued challenges, legislative interventions, engagements with stakeholders, eye care-related activities, and, indeed, celebration. We have continued to embrace the principle of optometry and dispensing opticianry as THE Primary Eye Care Professions and taking another giant step forward in establishing the SAOA amongst the most admired professional associations within the SAOA healthcare environment.

As we entered the centenary anniversary, the SAOA enjoys financial security and membership stability. Indeed, there is still much to be accomplished in the face of continued legislative change and uncertainty relating to healthcare in general, but we remain excited for what 2024 brings. To celebrate 100 years is very special and a wonderful platform to take the SAOA and the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry to the next level.

The efforts and commitment of the SAOA Team and the support and loyalty of the SAOA membership need to be acknowledged. Thank you!



HARRY ROSEN
SAOA CEO



SAOA DIRECTORS



NIVIEN SUBRAMANY



SANDY GOVENDER



ENRIQUE NZULA



NTOMBI ZITHA



MARTELIE BURGER



NABEELA HASROD



BRENDAN FLOYD

SAOA TEAM



HARRY ROSEN



MICHELLE NAIDOO



MILDRED UBOMBO



NALEDI MOROBI



NOKO THEMA



NTOMBI MASERUMULE



THIVASHA REDDY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SAOA: 100 YEARS!!

On Thursday 28 March 2024, past presidents, residing in Gauteng, joined the current SAOA President, CEO, SAOA Board and staff members, regional representatives, committee members, and others to toast the SAOA and pay tribute to SAOA members past and present, in celebration of the SAOA's 100 year anniversary and in advance of the actual birthday which is commemorated on 31 March (which fell on the Sunday during the Easter week-end).

Long-standing, 'veteran' SAOA member, Harry Tambourlas, with his golden voice, accompanied by pianist, Neal Robertson, entertained those present, who danced and cheered in appreciation of the music. Harry led the singing of 'Happy Birthday', following a brief speech by SAOA President, Nivien Subramany, who also cut the cake. The décor, cake, branded cookies, arranged by SAOA Marketing and Membership Manager, Thivasha Reddy, all added to the ambience and spirit of a very special occasion. Many happy returns, SAOA!



KEY EVENTS:

KEY HISTORIC EVENTS 1924

- The 1924 Winter Olympics, officially known as the First Olympic Winter Games, were a winter multi-sport event which was held in 1924 in Chamonix, France (initially referred to as International Winter Sports Week).
- Gandhi is released from prison after serving only two years of a six-year sentence following surgery for appendicitis.
- Adolf Hitler goes on trial for treason.
- J.B.M. Hertzog becomes the third Prime Minister of South Africa.
- Birth of South African Optometric Association

OTHER FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS 1924

- Marlon Brando April 3
- George H.W. Bush: June 12
- Jimmy Carter: October 1
- Allan Cormack :23 February – South African American physicist and 1979 Nobel Prize laureate.
- Stephen Fry: 14 July – Springbok rugby captain.
- Elias Motsoaledi: 26 July – political activist.
- Robert Sobukwe: 5 December – anti-apartheid activist
- Chris Eksteen- SAOA past-president
- Jackie Heatley – Former OASA President

TOP POP SONG CHART: 1924

NO	TITLE	SONG ARTIST
1	Rhapsody in Blue	George Gershwin
2	It Had to Be You	Isham Jones
3	California, Here I Come	Al Jolson
4	Charleston	Arthur Gibbs & his Gang

JANUARY TO JUNE 2024

31 JANUARY	SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CONFERENCE EXHIBITION SPACE – SOLD OUT
9 FEBRUARY	SAOA SUPPORTS PHYSIOTHERAPISTS IN THEIR ENDEAVOUR TO BE EXEMPT FROM COMPETITION LAWS.
17 FEBRUARY	A RECORD 84 SAOA MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING ATTEND THE SAOA AGM.
17 FEBRUARY	THE TENURES OF PAST PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT DOLLARS BOLOKA AND MARNA PIETERSE COME TO AN END.
19 FEBRUARY	NEWLY ELECTED DIRECTORS ENRIQUE NZULA AND BRENDAN FLOYD ATTEND FIRST BOARD MEETING AS BOARD MEMBERS WITH FULL VOTING RIGHTS.
21 FEBRUARY	THE 2024 BUDGET SPEECH DELIVERED BY FINANCE MINISTER ENOCH GODONGWANA.
28 FEBRUARY TO 2 MARCH	SAOA PRESIDENT ATTENDS OSSA CONFERENCE
30 FEBRUARY	SAOA OPPOSES AMENDMENT TO ETHICAL RULE 18 WHICH NOW PERMITS EMPLOYMENT OF REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS BY NON-APPROVED/NON-REGISTERED PARTIES
5 MARCH	PUBLIC HEALTH FORUM
10 TO 16 MARCH	WORLD GLAUCOMA WEEK
12 MARCH	WORLD GLAUCOMA DAY
17 MARCH	SAOA PARTICIPATES IN FREIGHT INTERVENTIONS IN W CAPE
17 TO 23 MARCH	WORLD OPTOMETRY WEEK
23 MARCH	WORLD OPTOMETRY DAY
28 MARCH	SAOA CELEBRATES SAOA 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY AT SAOA OFFICE.
28 MARCH	HPCSA POLICY ON BUSINESS PRACTICE MODIFIED TO ALIGN WITH AMENDED RULES
29 MARCH	PINK EYE EPIDEMIC KZN
31 MARCH	HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SAOA – 100 YEARS!
31 MARCH	SAOA SUBMITS PROPOSED 2025 OPTOMETRY BENEFIT STRUCTURE TO MEDICAL SCHEMES
31 MARCH	ONE-YEAR REPRIEVE GRANTED TO LOW-COST HEALTH INSURERS BY CMS.
31 MARCH	EARLY BIRD FOR ATTENDANCE AT SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ENDS
7 APRIL	WORLD HEALTH DAY

12 APRIL	SAOA MEETS REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ROAD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT CORPORATION TO ADDRESS FUTURE SCREENING FOR DRIVER CERTIFICATES.
19 TO 21 APRIL	SAOA PARTICIPATES AT CONTACT LENS WORKSHOP HOSTED BY UFS
1 MAY TO 30 JUNE	PRIVATE PRACTICE INFORMATION OFFICERS REQUESTED TO SUBMIT PAIA ANNUAL REPORTS
4 TO 8 MAY	SAOA REPRESENTED AT BHF CONFERENCE
5 MAY	WORLD HAND HYGEINE DAY
13 TO 19 MAY	MYOPIA AWARENESS WEEK
15 MAY	NHI SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT, CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
17 MAY	WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY
18 MAY	SAOA SUBMITS SUPPORT FOR INTENDED ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL EXAMINATION AS PUBLISHED BY PBODO

REGISTER NOW FOR SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CONFERENCE

The SAOA Centennial Celebration Conference, scheduled to take place on 18, 19, 20 July 2024, is **2 weeks away**. To date, **over five hundred delegates have registered**.

Over the course of the three days, the extensive educational programme will offer delegates the opportunity to attend presentations, workshops, panel discussions, and poster presentations, all of which will be CPD accredited in addition to a world class trade exhibition. Whether you choose to attend all three days or select specific days, you will undoubtedly benefit from the wealth of knowledge and expertise shared.

[View the programme & register](#)

[Click here to view our speakers](#)

[Click here to view our sponsors](#)

WORLD GLAUCOMA WEEK: 10-16 MARCH 2024

"Uniting for a Glaucoma-Free World".

World Glaucoma Week is a global initiative of the World Glaucoma Association (WGA) to raise awareness on glaucoma. Through a series of engaging worldwide activities patients, eye-care providers, health officials and the public are invited to contribute to sight preservation. The goal is to alert everyone to have regular eye (and optic nerve) checks to detect glaucoma as early as possible.

In accordance with the theme, ***"Uniting for a Glaucoma-Free World"***, the SAOA, in collaboration with The World Glaucoma Association (WGA) aimed to generate awareness and help individuals preserve their eyesight through World Glaucoma Week. This initiative put the spotlight on glaucoma to educate, inform and encourage action throughout communities on a global scale. World Glaucoma Week helps to bring awareness to the prompt diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma to prevent needless vision impairment in those who don't realise they have the disease. Highlighting glaucoma as a growing public health concern encourages the public to advocate for governments to instigate the necessary eye healthcare systems in communities that can't readily access care. **World Glaucoma Day took place on 12 March 2024.**



SAOA EMBRACES WORLD OPTOMETRY WEEK: 17 TO 23 MARCH 2024



World Optometry Day, March 23, shines an annual spotlight on the profession of optometry and the contribution of optometrists worldwide to increasing access to eye health care as a human right.

This year, the South African Optometric Association (SAOA) celebrated World Optometry Week 2024 from March 17 – 23 in accordance with the theme “Advancing Optometry’s Commitment to Global Eye Care.” To read more, [click here](#).

SAOA PARTICIPATES IN FREIGHT INTERVENTIONS IN WESTERN CAPE



The SAOA was, once again, invited to participate in a road safety awareness campaign on World optometry Day, 23 March 2024, in collaboration with the W Cape Department of Mobility and Public Works, Directorate Road Safety Management and Provincial Traffic Law Enforcement.

The campaign started off with free vehicle testing, where the community was invited to bring in their cars to make sure that they are safe on the roads. This gave us the opportunity to raise awareness and make the drivers realise the importance of regular eye examinations to remain safe on the roads. The awareness campaign continued with educational roadblocks that are planned around the province throughout the Easter season.



WORLD HEALTH DAY: 7 APRIL 2024

Around the world, the right to health of millions is increasingly coming under threat. The WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All has found that at least 140 countries recognize health as a human right in their constitution. Yet countries are not passing and putting into practice laws to ensure their populations are entitled to access health services. This underpins the fact that at least 4.5 billion people — more than half of the world's population — were not fully covered by essential health services in 2021.

To address these types of challenges, the theme for World Health Day 2024 is 'My health, my right'. This year's theme was chosen to champion the right of everyone, everywhere to have

access to quality health services, education, and information, as well as safe drinking water, clean air, good nutrition, quality housing, decent working and environmental conditions, freedom from discrimination and THE RIGHT TO SIGHT. To read more, [click here](#).



MYOPIA AWARENESS WEEK: 13 TO 19 MAY 2024

Myopia Awareness Week was first launched in 2018 to raise public awareness regarding the myopia pandemic and the growing burden of myopia. The initiative was introduced by the Brien Holden Vision Institute (BHVI) to help eye care practitioners understand the latest science and research and communicate with patients and parents/caregivers. There remains much to do in raising myopia awareness and encouraging evidence-based myopia management.

The profession is key to education and communication and making people aware of this progressive eye disease and the available management approaches. The SAOA has played a

key role in this regard, by making available educational posts to be disseminated via social media – also for use by members to be directed to patients, distribution of media releases, radio interviews and TV appearances. To access more information and 'Myopia Pearls,' [click here](#) and [here](#).



WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY: 17 MAY 2024

World Hypertension Day, an initiative of the World Hypertension League, is scheduled to take place on 17 May 2024. This initiative highlights the importance of better prevention, detection and treatment of high blood pressure. The theme of World Hypertension Day is “Measure your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer” which focuses on combatting low awareness rates worldwide, especially in low to middle income areas, and accurate blood pressure measurement methods.

We encourage our members to get involved in this campaign. In this regard, educational posts have been developed to be, directed to patients and members of the public. To read more, [click here](#).



PERFORMANCE OF THE SAOA

Oversight of performance is one of the key responsibilities of a Board of Directors. In this regard, the following performance parameters, as identified by the Board and CEO, are measured on a monthly basis.

In general, the reporting period (January to June 2024) has been yet another phase where the demands and challenges have been exceptionally high, but, again, the SAOA, as an organization, has risen to the occasion(s). It needs to be stated, however, that whilst the SAOA is currently both strong and stable, there is always room for significant improvement.



This report represents an overview of issues addressed and activities instituted during the report period. For the purpose of reporting, to view key factors and/or issues as well as activities that have characterised the reporting period requiring attention or simply to be noted, [click here](#).

FINANCE COMMITTEE COMMENT

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE:

Enrique Nzula (Chair), Harry Rosen (CEO), SIMARCA (External Finance company), Mildred Ubombo (Finance Administrator), Joy Stewart (Temp: Debt Collection), Thivasha Reddy (Manager: Marketing and Membership)



ENRIQUE NZULA

COMMENT:

At this time, as evidenced by the Annual Financial Statements prepared by auditors, Geyser du Plessis, the SAOA is in a healthy position, with particular reference to the current financial status and membership stability. It is important to note that the assets of the SAOA are at an all-time high without debt, overdraft, etc. To view the finance Committee Terms of Reference, [click here](#).

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE COMMENT

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

Committee Composition: Ntombi Zitha (Chair), Bignocia Masinge, Harry Rosen (CEO), Dollars Boloka, , Rajeshree Budhoo, Haseena Majid, Thivasha Reddy.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the key functions of the public health portfolio is to ensure that all populations have access to appropriate and cost-effective care, as far as possible, including eye health promotion and disease prevention services. We shall continue to plan to do more screenings to ensure better coverage by spreading the eye care events throughout the year.



NTOMBI ZITHA

PUBLIC HEALTH FORUM:

As the SAOA, we hold hands and collaborate with organisations active in the eye care space to bring eye care services to the disadvantaged communities. These eye care services are needed in both rural and urban areas. Public Health Forum Meeting. A meeting held on 5 March was well attended by the different organisations with more inputs such as commemorating Albinism Day in June on the 13Th.

UWC—CPUT- CHS: LANGUEDOC VISION SCREENING:

We had 6 Optical Dispensing students from CPUT and 3 supervisors, two from CPUT and NZ. The screening involved different health departments from UWC and an NPO – Right to care.

62 patients were screened, 24 referred for Cataract surgery, 15 for spectacles, 15 for Ophthalmology via CHC including 5 glaucoma suspects, 4 patients with over 2 degrees pterygium, and a number of suspicious diabetic retinopathy.

RURAL ALLOWANCE:

It is to be noted that optometrists are not receiving rural allowances like other practitioners who are in other medical fields. This issue regarding the rural allowances for optometrists has been raised previously with the relevant authorities but has not yet been successfully resolved. The issue of salaries in the public sector has also been addressed, but needs further attention.

SAOA PAMPHLETS IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES:

There is a need for SAOA patient educational pamphlets to be translated to different languages. A process has been initiated to ensure that at least three languages will be accommodated, namely Xhosa, Sepedi and TshiVenda.

CAUTION: INAPPROPRIATE USE OF ATROPINE

After cautioning the Department of Health in the W Cape regarding the indiscriminate use of Atropine, there was a call to put together information pamphlets to educate the nursing staff and the public on the administration of different types of eye drops. All relevant organisations are working together in designing as well as distributing pamphlets. Once finalized, the pamphlets will be translated into Isixhosa.

EDUCATION AND CLINICAL STANDARDS PORTFOLIO

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Nabeela Hasrod co-chairs the Education and Clinical Standards Committee with Dr. Casandra Seethal. The Committee currently comprises the following members: Nabeela Hasrod (Co-chair), Casandra Seethal (Co-chair), Tuwani Rasengane, Solani Mathebula, Raymond Mabaso, Patrick Mawila, Harry Rosen (CEO)

ACTIVITIES

The primary focus for 2023/2024 has been the design of the programme for the Centennial Celebration Committee. The mandate of EDCS is not restricted to topics and speakers, but encompasses proposed tracks, times, the formation of a Papers Committee, call for abstracts, etc.

STUDENT ASSOCIATION:

A committee has been formed as per Board resolution to drive the formation of a student body, to operate under the banner of the SAOA, to comprise of the following persons:

- Harry Rosen
- Patrick Mawila



NABEELA HASROD

- Dollars Boloka
- Thivasha Reddy
- Noko Thema
- A student representative from each of the academic institutions.

The student body, to be known as the South African Optometric Students Association (SAOSA), is to be introduced at the SAOA Centennial Celebration Conference.

PRIVATE PRACTICE PORTFOLIO COMMENT

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

Martelie Burger (Chair), Dollars Boloka, Sandy Govender, Enrique Nzula, Sandra Thomas, Harry Rosen (CEO), Thivasha Reddy.

THEME:

Emphasis is placed on Optometry as THE Primary Eye Care Profession.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

BENEFIT DESIGN FOR 2024:

The benefit design for 2025 was timeously submitted to schemes with continued engagement.

ONLINE SALE OF OPTICAL DEVICES:

Multiple engagements have been arranged by the SAOA and suppliers to clarify the regulation for the sale of optical devices from the online sale of optical devices to obviate any confusion that may persist.

TELEHEALTH:

The guidelines pertaining telehealth for optometry has now been published by the regulatory authority.

PHISC:

Private practice will be partaking in all PHISC activities such as meetings as we see the need for the SAOA to actively participate in industry matters pertaining to optometry.

OTC MEDICATION:

The SAOA Private Practice advocacy team has continued to lobby for schemes to accept claims for, over-the counter pharmaceutical products to treat certain eye conditions, as recommended by optometrists. SAOA members will continue to be advised of further development.

DESIGN OF MYOPIA MANAGEMENT BENEFITS:

The Private Practice Portfolio has provided practical tips related to myopia management as well as having designed a motivation form to submit to medical aids, where applicable.

MEDICAL INSURANCE PRODUCTS:

An 11th hour reprieve has been granted by the Council for Medical Schemes to insurers offering low-cost primary healthcare cover, giving them another year to continue selling their products after their exemption from the requirements of the Medical Schemes Act expired on 31 March.



MARTELIE BURGER



SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE COMMENT

SCOPE OF THE COMMITTEE:

‘Special Project’ means a strategically significant task or project that requires dedicated focus and resource to achieve a predetermined outcome, usually within a specified timeframe. A Special Project can result from a key issue identified by any portfolio where dedicated focus and resource may be required.

The Director for Special Projects, in collaboration with the CEO, manages tasks on a project management basis to accommodate key organizational initiatives as assigned by the Board. At this time, the following are special projects identified for 2024:

- The Centennial Celebration Conference
- Completion of an updated Coding Manual
- Comprehensive survey at practice level relating to the running of practices.
- Upgraded management of SAOA Coding structure in-house.
- Future of Dispensing Opticianry in terms of scope, education, etc.



BRENDAN FLOYD

Unsurprisingly, taking cognizance of resources and capacity required, emphasis to date has been placed on the preparation and planning for the Centennial Celebration Conference, scheduled to take place at Emperors Palace on 18, 19, 20 July 2024.

MARKETING PORTFOLIO COMMENT

The Marketing Committee is integral to all portfolios and committees within the fold of the SAOA.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Sandy Govender	- Marketing Director
Noko Thema	- Marketing Administrator
Michelle Naidoo	- Operations Manager
Chris Eksteen	- Member
Vhutshilo Magoro	- Member
Thivasha Reddy	- Marketing & Membership Manager
Harry Rosen	- CEO SAOA



SANDY GOVENDER

COMMENT:

The mandate of the Marketing committee is to play a pivotal central role in the communication of information from all SAOA portfolio committees as well as coordinating outreach activities and awareness programs for the public. The Marketing Committee therefore works closely with the Public Health Committee to ensure that our social responsibility objectives are met. The projects undertaken are driven by the office. Thivasha Reddy and Noko Thema work tirelessly to drive the agendas of the committee.

2024 marks the year of our Centennial Celebration. As such, much of the committee activities have been focused on ensuring that we deliver a fantastic celebration this year, with the main activity being our Centennial conference to be held on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of July. Besides preparations for the conference, our milestone plan with our awareness programs, continues to be executed with expert care, creative flair, and Swiss precision. Our 6/6 meetings are advertised monthly with attendance remaining impressive due to the important topics under discussion as well as the awarding of CPD points for the hour.

To view an overview of the Marketing campaigns during 2023, [click here](#).



PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA SIGNS NHI BILL

The National Health Insurance Bill is now law, with President Cyril Ramaphosa signing the highly contested legislation on 15 May 2024, five years after it was first introduced in Parliament, paving the way for universal health coverage in South Africa. But it is envisaged that the status quo in the healthcare sector will remain as it is for a long time still as none of the mechanisms needed to implement the scheme have been put in place.

A flood of legal suits is set to follow the signing of the NHI Bill and are almost certain to hold up the ambitious plan for long. Health professional groups, business organisations, trade unions and political parties have all vowed to challenge the legislation right up to the Constitutional Court.

The NHI journey started in 2011 when the NHI Green Paper was published for public consultation. This was followed by NHI pilot projects in 2012 with a focus on health system strengthening initiatives. The NHI White paper was published in 2015 laying the foundation for the NHI as the vehicle to achieve universal health coverage and a unified health system. The passing of the NHI Bill in June 2023 by the National Assembly is a key milestone, followed by the support from the NCOP.

The SAOA has responded to all NHI related drafts from the outset, and has published official positions, including a recent response to the NHI Bill. To view the SAOA position re the NHI Bill, [click here](#).



AMENDMENTS TO HPCSA ETHICAL RULES

The amendments to the Ethical Rules as published in the Government Gazette on 17 November 2023 are far-reaching with the potential to change the SA Healthcare landscape. This has particular relevance for the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry and addresses a number of Rules which relate to (e.g.) Inter-disciplinary collaboration, Sharing of Fees, Sharing of Rooms, Professional Appointments, amongst others. To read more, [click here](#).

HPCSA Policy On Business Practice Modified To Align With Amended Rules

The HPCSA Policy on Business Practice has now been amended (28 March 2024), in alignment with the amendment to specifically HPCSA Ethical Rule 18 (Professional Appointments), as published on 17 November 2023. The non-alignment between the amended Rule and Policy document was an issue raised with the HPCSA Private Practice Division, by the SAOA Board.

Section 2.4. of the Policy document, relating to Employment of Health Practitioners, now reads as follows:

2.4 Employment of Health Practitioners

2.4.1 Health practitioner registered with the Council may employ fellow registered health practitioner in accordance with the provisions of ethical rules.

2.4.2 Should a health practitioner wish to be employed or appointed by any unregistered entity, agency, agent, institution, or person, such employment or appointments should be aligned with the interests of the professions and the public.

2.4.3 It is the responsibility of the health practitioner to evaluate whether the prospective contract of employment is suitable for conducive ethical and professional practices in accordance with ethical rule 18.

To access the HPCSA Policy on Business Practice, [click here](#).

INDEMNITY INSURANCE

At this time, Indemnity Insurance or Medical Malpractice cover is not a legal requirement; however, there are entities such as PPN and Iso Leso who require proof of indemnity insurance as a condition of the contractual arrangement between the entity and the practitioner. It is irrelevant as to which policy the practitioner has in his/her possession or from whom the policy was obtained, as long the policy is legitimate and provides the necessary cover.

Should SAOA members be requested to provide proof of policy, it is advised that you simply provide certification (one pager), and not the entire policy, which can be obtained from CFP Brokers or downloaded via your CFP Broker profile. Should you have any queries or require additional information, please contact **Lauren Brooklyn** via lauren@cfpbrokers.co.za or **Harry Rosen** via ceo@saoa.co.za.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CODE?

The Harassment Code for workplaces in South Africa is 2 years old, yet it seems many employers have not realised that:

- ▶ The previous Code on sexual harassment has been repealed and the new Code covers broader harassment, including that related to race, ethnic and social origin;
- ▶ There are specific obligations and duties placed on employers to prevent and address workplace harassment - and having an (updated) harassment policy is not sufficient;
- ▶ The employer could be held vicariously liable for the actions of an employee perpetrating harassment, and the employer's failure to comply with the requirements of the Code could factor into a court's decision in this regard;
- ▶ The Code does not just cover employees in the workplace, but also covers situations where other people engage with your employees, and any work-related activities off-premises or online;
- ▶ Staff awareness training on this topic is one of these crucial obligations - and refresher training needs to be done regularly, and also for new staff.

Harassment in the context of this Code constitutes a form of unfair discrimination under the Employment Equity Act. To read more, [click here](#).

MAKE MYOPIA MANAGEMENT A PART OF YOUR PRACTICE TODAY!



Join optometrists worldwide in pledging to make myopia management the standard of care in their practices. Since the World Council of Optometry introduced its myopia management Standard of Care resolution in 2021, more than 50,000 optometrists around the globe have taken the pledge to make it an integral part of their practices.

Research has shown that actively managing myopia in childhood can slow onset and progression and prevent serious conditions such as retinal detachment and glaucoma in adulthood. To become one of the many who are taking the pledge, [click here](#).

GUIDELINES FOR OUTREACH ACTIVITIES/ SERVICES IN OPTOMETRY

Philanthropic outreach services are offered by a variety of organisations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs), higher education institutions (HEI), and in some cases private individuals outside of an organisation.

From the perspective of the Professional Board for Optometry and Dispensing Opticians (PBODO), a clear distinction must be made between philanthropic outreach services and services that are paid for by patients and are profit/cost driven. Remunerated services are not considered philanthropic and are to be considered as mobile practices. Guidelines for outreach activities /services in Optometry were approved on 19 September 2023 by the PBODO and published on the HPCSA website. To access these guidelines, [click here](#).

MEDICAL PRACTICE NOT DESIGNED FOR 'LEFTIES'

The challenges of being left-handed in clinical environments designed for right-handed people are many, and a change in mindset on the “right” hand and “wrong” hand is long overdue, writes medical student Chloe Milton in the BMJ.

“The surgeon glared at me. When I asked what I’d done wrong, I was told it was “scary” that I’d used the “wrong” hand to cut sutures when assisting in theatre. What’s scary to me is how easily the challenges faced by left-handed trainees are dismissed – an experience I’ve had not only in surgery but across all medical specialties. Medicine needs to move away from the idea of “right” and “wrong” hands, so that left-handed students learning examination and surgical skills are properly supported in caring for patients. To read more, [click here](#).

SAOA SUPPORTS INTENT OF PBODO TO INTRODUCE NATIONAL EXAM

The SAOA is in full support of the intended establishment of a National Examination to be determined by the Professional Board for Optometry and Dispensing Opticians (PBODO) as published in the Government Gazette on 8 March 2024. This development represents a substitution of Regulation 2 of the Regulations Relating to the Qualifications of Optometrists. To access the published amendment, as proposed, [click here](#).

NEGLECTING MENTAL HEALTH OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS POSES RISKS FOR PROFESSION

Healthcare providers struggling with mental well-being issues need access to more support and resources. A survey undertaken in 2023 was aimed at better understanding the key factors impacting the mental well-being of doctors. The survey findings made for sombre reading, painting a picture of an industry grappling with serious mental well-being concerns. To read more, [click here](#).

FAREWELL TO COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE PASSED



CATHY FRANCONI



LERATO LERUTLA

WCO AND ESSILOR-LUXOTTICA PARTNER TO ESTABLISH A GLOBAL STANDARD OF CARE FOR PRESBYOPIA AND THE AGING EYE

"We are excited to partner with Essilor-Luxottica to bring the importance of addressing our patients' need to see well up close. There are many new options to address presbyopia, and we agree that it is important to bring the information to the eye care practitioners so they can provide the best care for the patients. Along with helping to ensure evidence-based techniques are used, the partnership will highlight the eye health changes that are ongoing as the patients grow older." - Dr. Sandra Block, WCO President.

To read more, [click here](#).

HPCSA ACTS AGAINST MEDICAL PRACTITIONER FOR FAILING TO OBTAIN INFORMED CONSENT

COMPLAINT

"You are guilty of unprofessional conduct or conduct which, when regard is had to your profession, is unprofessional in that during June 2021, in respect of your patient, you acted in a manner that is not in accordance with the norms and standards of your profession in that you did not discuss and/or disclose your fees to the patient (failure to obtain informed consent)".

PENALTY

The respondent was fined R30 000, R15 000 of which is suspended for two years on condition that the respondent is not found guilty of a similar offence during the period of suspension. The R15 000 is payable within seven days of receipt of the sanction. To read more, [click here](#).

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND ASSISTANT EDITOR: AFRICAN VISION AND EYE HEALTH JOURNAL (AVEH)



DR. ELIZABETH CHETTY



PROFESSOR ALVIN MUNSAMY

Congratulations to Professor Alvin Munsamy and Dr. Elizabeth Chetty who have recently been appointed Editor-in Chief, Optometry, and Assistant Editor, Optometry, respectively, of the African Vision and Eye Health Journal (AVEH). Professor Munsamy replaces Prof Alan Rubin who was acknowledged for his untiring efforts and contribution to the journal in a previous News Flash.

In 1934, SA Optometrist, journal of the SAOA, was published for the first time, which brought world class research and clinical articles to SAOA members and readers around the world. In 2014, SA Optometrist was re-launched as the African Vision and Eye Health (AVEH) as a joint venture between the African Vision Research Institute, South African Optometric Association, and the African Council of Ophthalmology.

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS: CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION MONTHLY QUIZ



In the spirit of celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the SAOA in 2024, a number of activities have been introduced which have included the publishing of weekly historic snippets as well as competitions such as a monthly quiz and a crossword puzzle (published in the Optiforum). The Quiz questions, published at the end of each month, were based primarily on historic snippets published during the course of the month.

Each month, from end August 2023 to end March 2024, one winner was drawn from a pool of correct answers received, each of whom received a prize – 30% off the Centennial Celebration Conference fee. In addition, at end March 2024, all submissions with the correct answers were eligible to be entered into another draw where 3 (three) members could receive full complimentary admission to the Centennial Celebration Conference, including all social events.

On Saturday 20 April 2024, SAOA Vice President and Marketing Director, Sandy Govender and SAOA Ambassador, Zain Johnson, met to draw three names, literally from a hat containing the names of all members who had submitted correct answers to the monthly quiz, from the outset. Congratulation, therefore, are extended to the following three members who have won full complimentary registrations to attend our Centennial Celebration Conference, scheduled to take place at Emperors Palace, from 18 to 20 July 2024.

- **Ranjeni Govender**
- **Andries Burger**
- **Ravindra Vala**

THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MONTHLY QUIZ.

SAOA PARTNERS



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SAOA MEMBERSHIP IN A NUTSHELL: 10 POINT PACKAGE

1

**SAOA HAS ONLY ONE
MANDATE – OUR MEMBERS!**

**SAOA PROTECTS RIGHTS OF
MEMBERS IN ALL AREAS OF
OPTOMETRIC ENDEAVOUR**

2

**SAOA ADVOCATES AT ALL
LEVELS TO ACCOMMODATE
PROFESSIONAL NEEDS OF
MEMBERS**

3

**SAOA PROMOTES THE
NECESSITY FOR REGULAR
EYE HEALTH & VISION
EXAMINATIONS**

4

**SAOA PUBLISHES NEWS,
VIEWS & UPDATES ON ALL
MATTERS RELATING TO
OPTOMETRY & DISPENSING
OPTICIANRY**

5

**SAOA PROVIDES GUIDANCE
& DIRECTION PERTAINING
TO LEGISLATIVE, ETHICAL,
PRACTICE MANAGEMENT &
CLINICAL MATTERS**

6

**SAOA PROVIDES
ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT
ON AN INDIVIDUAL &
COLLECTIVE BASIS WHERE
PROFESSION & PRACTICE
RELATED CHALLENGES
ARISE**

7

**SAOA PROVIDES HIGH
STANDARD CONTINUING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

8

**SAOA PROVIDES
A NETWORKING
PLATFORM, LOCALLY &
INTERNATIONALLY**

9

**SAOA NEGOTIATES
BENEFITS & DISCOUNTED
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
MEMBERS, INCLUDING
INDEMNITY INSURANCE**

10



From a Tradition of Excellence,
the Force of the Future





THANKYOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT



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