



OPTIFORUM

OPTIFORUM JANUARY TO JUNE 2023



SAOA

South African Optometrist Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	FOREWORD	20	THE SECTION 59 DEBATE
3	INTRODUCTION	21	MOBILE PRACTICE: MOVING FORWARD
4	MESSAGE FROM SAOA PRESIDENT	22	FAREWELL TO COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE PASSED
5	FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO	22	SAOA MEMBER 6/6 FORUM
8	2023 AT A GLANCE - TO DATE	23	SAOA WEBINAR SERIES 2023
10	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FOCUS GROUPS 2023	24	THE CONFERENCE COMPANY
10	THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE	24	REGULATIONS RELATING TO CONDUCT OF INQUIRIES INTO ALLEGED UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
12	THE SAOA BOARD	25	COMPENSATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND DISEASES ACT (COIDA) - RECENT AMENDMENTS
12	PERFORMANCE OF THE SAOA	25	HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE
13	FINANCE COMMITTEE COMMENT	25	CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CONFERENCE: SAVE THE DATE
13	PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE COMMENT	26	SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CROSSWORD BONANZA
14	EDUCATION AND CLINICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE	27	TAKEALOT
15	PRIVATE PRACTICE COMMITTEE COMMENT	27	DISCRIMINATION, OR NOT?
16	MARKETING COMMITTEE COMMENT	27	SAOA PARTNERS
18	SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE COMMENT	28	SAOA MEMBERSHIP IN A NUTSHELL: 10 POINT PACKAGE
18	THE WCO GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA		
19	EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH 2023		
20	THE ORGANISED CRIME UNIT		



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.

INTRODUCTION



THE SAOA CELEBRATES HER 99TH BIRTHDAY!!!

On the 31st of March, the SAOA TURNED 99 YEARS OLD. We celebrated in style with a cake and photo session at the SAOA OFFICE. A narrative plus photos was sent on all platforms to all members and stakeholders. This marked our official year countdown to 31st March 2024 and our centennial celebration!!

The year 2024 represents a significant milestone for the SAOA and indeed, the optometric industry, in general, as we prepare to celebrate our 100-year anniversary. In this regard, we look forward to hosting our mega-conference, scheduled to take place on 18, 19 & 20 July 2024 at Emperors Palace, in collaboration with the industry. Our planning for the Conference commenced in March 2021; in this regard, the following are actions of relevance.

- Appointment of a Professional Conference Organiser – The Conference Company
- Call For Abstracts
- Competitions - introduced quiz and crossword.
- Emperors Palace secured.
- Historic Snippets
- NCB Support
- Save The Date
- Stakeholder Engagements - International and local

See below, details relating to The Conference Company and the Crossword Puzzle.



MESSAGE FROM SAOA PRESIDENT

Greetings Colleagues,

The SAOA is well known and home to many, a professional association that represents the profession and Optometry and dispensing Opticianry. We have over 1600 registered members who benefit from our services and activities.

OUR VISION – promote excellence in eye care for all South Africans.

OUR MISSION - advance the profession through advocacy, education, research, and community service.

‘It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.’ The opening paragraphs of a ‘Tale of Two Cities’, by Charles Dickens, has relevance for the professions of Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry, as we consider the recent past, moving towards 2024.

From a professional perspective, these past few years have introduced an era in the evolution of Optometry, characterized by what we now refer to as ‘new norms. Without fully realizing the extent of professional advancement, in recent times, we have embraced technology in the form of: Tele-Optometry, including the now regulated online sale of optical devices, we have also entered the world of Artificial Intelligence linked to diabetic retinopathy screening, amongst others. Importantly, an expanded scope which includes the use of pharmaceuticals to treat specified eye conditions, has cemented the profession of Optometry in its rightful place as THE Primary Eye Care Profession. In addition, the professions of Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry being recognized by the Department of Employment and Labour as Essential Services.

Importantly, we are already negotiating the future which includes, but not restricted to:

The concept of Universal Health and the National Health Insurance (NHI), the threat of a Certificate of Need, the probability of the introduction of specialties, Big Business hovering and keen to enter the eye care market, the future role of medical schemes within the context of the NHI, and Anticipated amendments to the HPCSA Ethical Rules, amongst others.

I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to our valuable members for your support and, Your Association would not be the same without each of you. A big thank you to our board of Directors, Committee Members, Regional Representatives, CEO, and staff for their hard work and relentless effort.



NIVIEN SUBRAMANY

SAOA President

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

"The Vision for the SAOA Office: To be the most admired professional association in South Africa. This has serious and important implications and impacts on every aspect of our operations and the way we do the things that we do".

Since 1997, Korn Ferry has partnered with FORTUNE magazine to identify and rank the World's Most Admired Companies. The FORTUNE World's Most Admired Companies study surveys top executives and directors from eligible companies, along with financial analysts, to identify the companies that enjoy the strongest reputations within their industries and across industries. Attributes of organisations which contribute to being categorised amongst 'the most admired' include:

- Ability to attract and retain talented people
- **Quality of leadership and management**
- Innovativeness
- **Quality of products or services**
- Financial soundness

The SAOA has embarked on a path to ensure that the efficiencies and effective of our operations continually to improve and meet the standards of a most admired organisation'.



HARRY ROSEN
SAOA CEO



THROUGH MY EYES AND MIND: CELEBRATING, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

– A Tribute by Professor Paul Ramkissoon.

The formation of the South African Optical Association in 1924 was a colossal step in laying the foundation of organised optometry in South Africa. Essentially, this milestone paved the way for civil society, health professionals and optometrists to direct their concerns to the designated custodian of the profession.

With profound gratitude, I acknowledge the food and comfort my staff, colleagues and family enjoy abundantly because of optometry. Through the lens of appreciation, raise your glasses and cheers to a century reached by our professional association. Long live the ideals of optometrists who live and have passed on and best wishes to our future colleagues who receive the baton to cultivate the ideals of our great profession of optometry with pride and dignity!

To access the full article, [click here](#).



**PROFESSOR PAUL
RAMKISSOON**

ASAIPA: SMART HEALTH SUMMMIT

As per previous report, the Smart Health Summit, regarded as a premier event aimed at driving digital transformation in the healthcare industry was held in Gauteng on 1 and 2 June 2023. Invitations were extended by the Alliance of South African Independent Practitioners Association (ASAIPA) to SAOA Office Bearers to attend the event. In addition, the ASAIPA National Medical Awards was streamed live at the Smart Summit Gala evening on 2 June 2023. Martelie Burger attend the event on 1 June and Nivien represented the SAOA at the Gala evening.



ASAIPA AWARDS

The following nominations were put forward by the SAOA which automatically resulted in the ASAPA Awards for Optometry.

Faith Chabedi - Community Service Award

Peter Brauer - HCP Excellence Award

Prof. Khathutshelo Percy Mashige - Healthcare Leadership Award

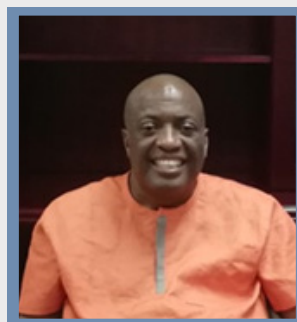
Jevon Moodley - Health Sciences Student Award - UKZN



FAITH CHABEDI
Community Service
Award



PETER BRAUER
HCP Excellence
Award



PROF. MASHIGE
Healthcare Leadership
Award



JEVON MOODLEY
Health Sciences
Student Award

The student nominations put forward by the academic institutions each received a Certificate in Recognition of Academic Excellence at the SAOA AGM held in February.

2023 AT A GLANCE - TO DATE

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

1 January	New Year's Day
2 January	Public Holiday
4 January	World Braille Day
1 February	National Cancer Day
6 - 10 February	Pregnancy Awareness Week
9 February	Webinar: Advances in Technologies for Eye Health and Vision Care
14 February	St. Valentine's Day
17 February	Health Lifestyle Awareness Day
18 February	SAOA Annual General Meeting
18 February	Webinar: Unspoken strategies to manage difficult patients
22 February	Member 6/6 Forum

MARCH & APRIL

1 March	Commencement of Manager: Marketing and Membership
2 March	Webinar: How to survive economic hardship
8 March	International Women's Day
12 March	World Glaucoma Day
12 - 18 March	World Glaucoma Week
20 March	World Head Injury Awareness Day
21 - 25 March	World Optometry Week
23 March	World Optometry Day
23 March	Webinar: The role of optometrists and occupational therapists in the management of vision and eye problems
30 March	Member 6/6 Forum
31 March	SAOA's 99 TH Birthday

7 April	World Health Day/ WHO 75 TH Anniversary
13 April	Webinar: An overview of the NHI bill and its implications for vision and eye health services
19 April	Member 6/6 Forum
20 April	Webinar: Research in Practice: How to write a proposal

MAY & JUNE

1 May	International Workers Day
3 May	Board Meeting
4 May	Corporate Governance Workshop
5 May	World Hand Hygiene Day
8 May	Focus Group Pilot - Members
10 May	Focus Group Pilot – Non-Members
11 May	Webinar: How to maximize your practice operations and prevent fraud
12 May	International Awareness Day for Chronic Immunological and Neurological Diseases
14 May	Mothers' Day
15 May - 15 June	Go Turquoise for the Elderly Campaign
15 May	Focus Group Pilot – Mixed: Members and Non-Members
17 May	World Hypertension Day
18 May	Webinar: Myopia management: An African/South African context
23 - 28 May	Myopia Awareness Week
24 May	Member 6/6 Forum
28 May	International Day of Action for Women's Health
1 June	International Children's Day
5 June	World Environment Day
15 June	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
21 June	Member 6/6 Forum
22 June	Webinar: Eye Health and Vision Care in Children
29 June	Eid-Al-Adha

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FOCUS GROUPS 2023

The SAOA is dedicated to the rendering of the highest standards of service delivery to accommodate the interests and needs of the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry. To this end, the views and opinions of our members and stakeholders are greatly valued to ensure that expectations and requirements are met.

Members were thus cordially invited to attend and participate in small discussion groups where issues of relevance were addressed, which included issues facing the professions and expectations of the SAOA, amongst others. A comprehensive report is in the process of being drafted which will be shared with all.

Focus group initiatives provide a captive audience to ascertain the needs and wants of members and non-members. It provides an excellent opportunity to present the attributes of the SAOA as an organisation protecting its members interests. Interventions and submissions can be presented meaningfully. Research and feedback can be extremely beneficial to provide input into decision-making relating to future strategies and activities.

THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

The National Health Insurance Bill (NHI) has been passed by the National Assembly, taking it one step closer to becoming legislation although the road to the adoption of the contentious scheme is still a long way off, and it is almost certain to be met with legal action and more protests.

Health Minister Joe Phaahla has hailed the Bill as one of the most 'revolutionary' pieces of legislation to be passed since democracy but has acknowledged that there was much spadework to be done before its implementation, which will be in phases.

The Bill, which will now go through the National Council of Provinces, was given the go-ahead in June 2023, with 205 MPs voting in favour while 125 voted against it. This was despite vehement opposition from political parties, business, healthcare professional groups and activists, who warn that the Bill, in its current version, will not address the myriad challenges in the sector.

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





SAOA POSITION: NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (NHI) BILL

The SAOA has responded to the NHI Bill as passed by the National Assembly. In essence, as with other health professional associations, the SAOA recognises and fully supports the need for the current SA Health System to be transformed. However, the absence of relevant details and anticipated costs to fund the NHI System, as proposed, are cause for concern. To read more, [click here](#).



NHI WILL COVER HEALTH MARKET INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS – CRISP

The Health Department has defended its failure to implement the recommendations of the competition commission's Health Market Inquiry (HMI), saying many of the issues identified in the organisation's final report will be dealt with when National Health Insurance (NHI) is in place.

The inquiry spent five years investigating the private healthcare market and published its final report in September 2019, making far-reaching recommendations aimed at improving competition and giving patients a better deal, a Business LIVE report notes. It said at the time that a better-regulated private sector was vital if the government was to purchase services from private healthcare providers under NHI.

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

THE SAOA BOARD



The advent of COVID in March 2020 gave rise to a host of what has been termed, 'new norms', which have included the format in which meetings have been conducted. The word 'Zoom' has taken a whole new meaning. From the perspective of the SAOA, CPD events have taken the form of webinars and stakeholder engagements have been held virtually, as have SAOA Committee and Board meetings.

The SAOA Board meets frequently via the Zoom platform, which includes a weekly Board Update at 7h30 on Wednesday mornings. However, the time had come to consider reverting back to a physical Board meeting, at least once during the current fiscal year; and so, the

SAOA Board members congregated at the SAOA Offices in Midrand to attend a Board meeting for the first time since February 2020. An Ethics and Corporate Governance workshop was held the following day at the Midrand Conference Centre for the benefit of SAOA Board members, committee members, Regional Representatives and SAOA staff members.

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 monthly.

In general, the reporting period (February to May 2023) has been yet another phase where the demands and challenges have been exceptionally high, but, again, the SAOA, as an organisation, has risen to the occasion(s). It needs to be stated, however, that whilst the SAOA is currently both strong and stable, it needs to be reiterated

that lack of significant membership growth and the performance of regional representatives remain key concerns. 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](#).

KEY PERFORMANCES AREAS

- Advocacy
- Communication
- Community
- Finances
- Human Resources
- Image
- Membership
- Stakeholder Relations
- Strategy
- Value Delivery



FINANCE COMMITTEE COMMENT

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

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



MARNA PIETERSE

COMMENT:

At this time, 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:

Bignocia Masinge (Chair), Harry Rosen, Dollars Boloka, Ntombi Zitha, Faiza Allibhai, Rajeshree Budhoo, Haseena Majid



BIGNOCIA MASINGE

INTRODUCTION:

One of the 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 are mandated to facilitate services to the people out there, so we still continue to plan to do more screenings even before the eye care awareness month to ensure efficiency and better coverage, while spreading the events throughout the year.

PUBLIC HEALTH FORUM:

As the SAOA, we are excited to 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 because we have seen both in the rural areas that it is under serviced when it comes to eye care and, in the cities, there are still poor communities like the townships, hostels and squatter camps that are not enjoying the same services as the CBD areas.

RURAL ALLOWANCE:

It is to be noted that optometrists are not getting rural allowance like other practitioners who are in other medical fields. This issue about the rural allowance for optometrists has been raised previously, but it had not been successfully solved, as yet. The issue of salaries in the public sector had also been addressed, which 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 Xitsonga, Sepedi and IsiZulu. Sharing these pamphlets with the population will have also make a huge difference during Eye Care Awareness Month (ECAM).

EDUCATION AND CLINICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION:

Dr Nabeela Hasrod assumed responsibility for the Education and Clinical Standards portfolio, as of 20 February 2023.



NABEELA HASROD

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

As part of the familiarization process, Nabeela 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 in 2023 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.

AFRICAN VISION AND EYE HEALTH JOURNAL AVEH:

The journal has agreed to publish a special edition, dedicated to the Centennial Celebration. The intent is to include research papers of presenters, rather than full articles which will assist the authors without accreditation compromise. The plan is to have the journal published in advance of the conference.

It is also important to note that Professor Alan Rubin will be leaving the journal in his capacity as Editor-In -Chief (Optometry), to be replaced as soon as a suitable replacement is found. We paid tribute to Alan in a recent News Flash.

STUDENT ASSOCIATION:

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

- Harry Rosen
- Patrick Mawila
- Dollars Boloka
- Thivasha Reddy
- Noko Thema

PRIVATE PRACTICE COMMITTEE COMMENT

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

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

THEME:

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

KEY ACTIVITIES:

Key Activities of the Private Practice Committee are summarised below:

• BENEFIT DESIGN FOR 2024:

The benefit design for 2024 was timeously submitted to schemes with continued engagement.

• ONLINE SALE OF OPTICAL DEVICES:

Multiple engagement has been arranged held 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:

We are patiently awaiting the outcome and publishing of regulations on telehealth from 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.

• FOCUS GROUPS:

Private Practice and marketing have embarked on a focus group campaign throughout the country in order to get a better understanding of the needs

of the optometrists in those areas. This will serve as the groundwork for future focus groups.

• OTC MEDICATION:

Medical Schemes such as Gems have recently given access to the GEMS formulary to optometry on the following products:

- Cellufresh single dose vial 0.4ml
- Celluvisc 0.4ml single dose vial
- Refresh liquigel 15ml
- Refresh Tears 15ml
- Optive gel drops 10ml
- Optive 10ml
- Optive plus 10ml
- Optive fusion 10ml
- Optive fusion ud 0.4 ml
- Optive omega 0.4ml

SAOA members will be advised of further development in the foreseeable future.

• DESIGN OF MYOPIA MANAGEMENT BENEFITS:

The Private Practice Portfolio has designed a myopia management motivation form to submit to medical aids with limited effort to the members.

• MEDICAL INSURANCE PRODUCTS:

We are waiting for further guidance from CMS on the medical insurance products.



DOLLARS BOLOKA



MARTELIE BURGER



MARKETING COMMITTEE 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-Committee Member, Vhutshilo Magoro-committee Member, Thivasha Reddy-Marketing and Membership Manager, Harry Rosen-CEO SAOA



SANDY GOVENDER

COMMENT:

The marketing committee is integral to all portfolios and committees within the fold of the SAOA. The mandate of the committee is to provide a bridge between the committees and their target audiences. This advocacy extends to all stakeholders including but not limited to members, the public, affiliated professions, the National Department of health, HPCSA, CMS, suppliers and NGO'S working in the healthcare space. The Public Health Portfolio works closely with Marketing and the Marketing Director serves on the Committee to enable quick feedback and optimal cross pollination.

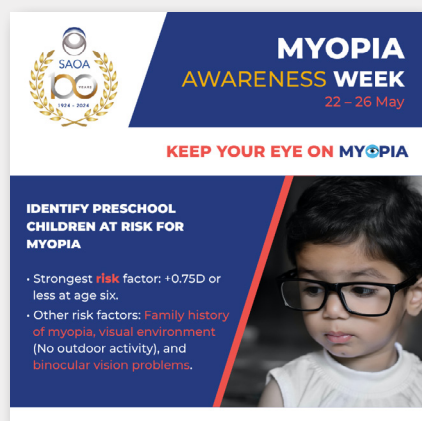
The goal is to attain a positive image rating at the levels of both the SAOA membership as well as external stakeholders. In accordance with the desire to intensify awareness, the development of cost- effective impactful advertisement campaigns, is the focus of the committee. Themes are explored and powerful visuals are used across a spectrum of media encompassing publications, Website, Facebook page, Screen Saver, Banners (meetings, conferences) etc. of ideas.

The theme for the year 2023, remained the same as that for 2022. The profile of the Profession has been heightened to raise awareness of Optometry's place in the health care arena. Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry are **THE Primary Eye Care Professions**. The theme continues to underpin all advertising campaigns ensuring that the Profession occupies its rightful place in the minds of all stakeholders and members of the public. In addition to this, the logo and slogan for the centennial celebration will be used independently across all mediums and in

most correspondence to herald the coming of an iconic 100th year of the SAOA'S existence. This milestone will be emphasized throughout this year by an ongoing marketing campaign involving amongst others, the use of historical snippets and 'save the date' reminders. The intensive marketing programme being pursued for 2023 is supported by dedicated resources, a dedicated marketing portfolio at Director Level, a full-time Marketing and Membership Manager, Thivasha Reddy and a Marketing Administrator Noko Thema. Thivasha is making a huge difference and freeing up capacity to ensure a fantastic execution of all future campaigns. Thivasha brings a wealth of experience and marketing expertise to the committee, and we are harnessing her potential by adopting a 'phased timeline' approach. She has already taken over the WhatsApp postings as well as many office tasks requiring her expertise.

Thivasha is proving to be an invaluable asset to the Marketing team. Also on the committee, we have a full time Marketing Administrator, Noko Thema, who does an outstanding job with all Marketing related issues. Creative agency - G STUDIO - Incorporates cutting-edge information and communication technology within all marketing activities. Public relations are executed on a deliberate, planned, and sustained basis. Different communication pathways are used to ensure swift dissemination of information to target groups. These include Newsflashes, WhatsApp messages, Newsletters (Opti forum- a biannual publication), Webinars, social media, twitter, Facebook, and communication trees. For 2023, we are still to explore the option of using TIKTOK to reach a younger demographic. This is necessary, especially for campaigns directed at children or teenagers and young adults. The Member Communication Hotline ensures that member queries are addressed promptly and comprehensively.

To view an overview of the Marketing activities to date, [click here](#).



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 2023:

- 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.



NIVIEN SUBRAMANY

THE WCO GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA

Mr. Patrick Mawila was elected to the WCO Board, uncontested, as the Geographic Representative for Africa. Patrick was nominated by the SAOA.

Having served in the regional organisation (AFCO) and then as a board member of the WCO, Patrick has a really good understanding of the global and local challenges facing the profession and society. Best wishes are extended to Patrick in his capacity as WCO Board member.



PATRICK MAWILA



EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH 2023

♥ YOUR EYES
AT WORK



LOVE YOUR EYES AT WORK

24 SEPTEMBER TO 18 OCTOBER 2023

"At least 2.2 billion people have vision impairment or blindness, of which over 1 billion cases could have been prevented or have yet to be addressed".

- World Health Organisation (WHO)

Love Your Eyes at Work is about helping people understand the importance of protecting their vision in the workplace and calling on business leaders to prioritise the eye health of workers, everywhere. With the help of our partners and members, we aim to show the world how important it is to #LoveYourEyes. This is our opportunity to motivate employers everywhere to implement change. No matter where you are or what job you do, it is important to prioritise and protect your eye health at work. This includes everything from avoiding accidents in the workplace, which are too often caused by or lead to poor vision, to productivity, which is greatly improved when the eye health of workers is a made priority.

World Sight Day is on Thursday, 12th October 2023. One of our initiatives is the SAOA Big Walk for Sight, scheduled to take place at the Meerendal Wine Estate in the W Cape. The aim of the SAOA Big Walk for Sight is to focus attention on the importance of eye care in the workplace. Together, we will encourage employers to make eye health initiatives standard practice and promote eye health habits that will benefit the well-being, safety, and productivity of millions of employees.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

• LOVE YOUR EYES - IAPB PLEDGE

- **PLEDGE** to reach 10 million vision and eye health exams by World Sight Day.
- The SAOA encourages all practitioners to extend outreach programs into the **workplace**.
- **Screen employees** at schools, offices, factories, farms, and taxi ranks.
- Follow the link to register your pledge on the **IAPB WEBSITE**.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

ERGONOMICS FOR THE EYES OF FRONTLINERS

- Provide **regular** vision and eye health exams.
- Computer induced workplace **dry eye** must be ruled out.
- Advise employees to work at **arm's length** and adjust font.
- Provide computer **filters** for glare and blue light.
- Encourage employees to follow the **20-20-20** rule.
- Have **ambient lighting** when on a digital device.
- Ensure that office chairs are **ergonomically** designed for maximum support.
- Assist employees with **mental health** issues and stress.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

FACTS ABOUT VISION IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Vision correction can improve productivity by **22%**.
2. **46%** moved up an income bracket after cataract surgery.
3. **9/10** work eye injuries are preventable with safety eyewear.
4. **Prolonged** use of digital devices can reduce productivity due to eyestrain.
5. **90%** of all sight loss is preventable.
6. Worldwide **160 million** people with moderate to severe vision loss are of work age.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

6 WAYS TO REDUCE DIGITAL EYESTRAIN

1. Wear your **optical corrections** and visit your optometrist annually.
2. After 20 minutes, take a break for 20 seconds and look 6m(20ft) away. (**20/20/20** rule)
3. Adjust your computer screen to **20 degrees** below eye level.
4. Blink more or use **artificial tears**.
5. **Adjust** brightness, font size and contrast.
6. Use **anti-glare** screens or screen protectors.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

PROTECTION IN THE WORKPLACE

1. **Safety glasses** prevent foreign objects from damaging the eyes.
2. They must be used in **construction, welding, and mining**.
3. They can **protect** against high intensity harmful light.
4. **Safety glasses** protect against chemicals and pesticides.
5. Ensure adequate **training** on safety protocols.
6. Know **where to go** if there is an accident at work.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUN PROTECTION

- Always invest in a **good quality** pair of sunglasses.
- Sunglasses protect the eyes from damaging **UV A/B radiation**.
- **UV** damages the eyelids, cornea, lens, and retina.
- When working outdoors, sunglasses **eliminate** glare and eyestrain.
- In windy conditions, sunglasses can protect against **debris**.

EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH
24 SEPT - 18 OCT

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

GOOD VISION AND SAFE DRIVING

- All drivers must visit an **Optometrist** for a certificate of competence.
- **Good vision** is important to ensure the safety of pedestrians and other drivers.
- Ask your optometrist for **anti-glare** coatings and protective tints.
- **Cataracts, glaucoma, and retinal disease** cause poor vision for drivers.
- **Diagnosis and management** or referral are done by your optometrist.

WORLD SIGHT DAY
12TH OCTOBER 2023

♥ YOUR EYES AT WORK

THE ORGANISED CRIME UNIT

The Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) defines organized crime in a much more “flexible” manner since commercial crimes are prosecuted under the scope of organized crime. Commercial and organized crime can be defined as sustained activity by a group of three or more people who engage continuously in criminal activity.

Evidence of organized crime dates back to early mining communities in the 1800's where gangs of robbers were considered organized criminals since they continuously committed crimes in large groups. More recent definitions of organized crime date back to the late 1980's and 1990's when criminal activity became more sophisticated. In essence, persons who derive a living from illegal activities fall into this category and it is in this regard that we continue to work with senior police officers relating to situations where professional acts are performed by non-registered persons.

THE SECTION 59 DEBATE

CLAWBACKS

For some time, the SAOA has opposed medical schemes clawing back funds paid to practitioners who have rendered high standard professional services to scheme members (patients) in good faith, months after the patients had received the benefits of the services – often because the membership of the patient had been retrospectively terminated by the scheme.

A complaint had been lodged with the CMS in this regard; incredibly the CMS ruled in favour of the scheme. Disgusted with the unfairness of the scheme, supported by the CMS, we appealed the Ruling of the CMS, with the assistance of legal counsel.

On 7 August 2023, the appeal was heard by the Appeal Committee which has now upheld the appeal in favour of the practitioner. This is a significant development and victory for practitioners who have too often been the victims of unethical tactics by medical schemes.

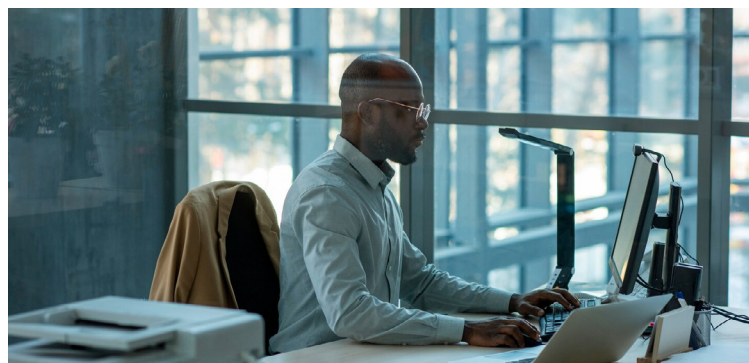
To view the Ruling with reasons, [click here](#).



MOBILE PRACTICE: MOVING FORWARD

Concerns have been expressed to the PBODO regarding what appears to be confusion and inconsistencies relating to the rendering of professional (optometric) services via a mobile practice model by registered practitioners.

Taking cognizance of the Guidelines, as revised by the PBODO, there appear to be only **three options** for practitioners to render services outside the fixed practice ('home base') environment:



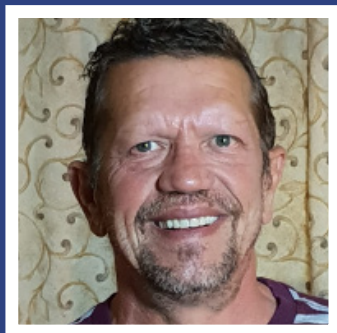
- 1. SCREENINGS** - indeed, the guidelines pertaining to the screenings, as defined, are clarified in the Guidelines where approval from the PBODO is not required. It is noted, however, any reference to possible diagnoses falls outside the boundaries of a screening.
- 2. ITINERANT PRACTICE** - The Itinerant practice is also well defined, with no further clarity required, with emphasis being placed on a regularly occurring practice.
- 3. MOBILE OPTOMETRY PRACTICE** - As defined in the Guidelines as "a non-permanent practice that offers the same/equivalent service as a fixed practice owned by the practitioner". It is to be noted that this definition does not, in any way, refer to services rendered out of a bus, caravan, van or any other vehicle. Of relevance is that in many cases, if not most, the rendering of mobile services (outside the 'fixed' practice), takes place in Board rooms or spaces/rooms made available by the organisations or communities being served. Thus, if a practitioner, provides optometric services, which may include an eye health and vision examination and/or the provision of optical devices, where applicable, outside the 'fixed Practice' environment, this constitutes a mobile practice, which in our view needs to be regulated with approval granted.



The Application form justifiably is designed to ensure protection of equipment transported to the 'site' and asks for vehicle details if services are rendered via vehicle.

We have been advised that the PBODO is in the process of revising the guidelines in the near future, but providers are to adhere to the guidelines in the meantime.

FAREWELL TO COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE PASSED



ERWIN MEYER



ALPHONS THEUNISSEN

SAOA MEMBER 6/6 FORUM

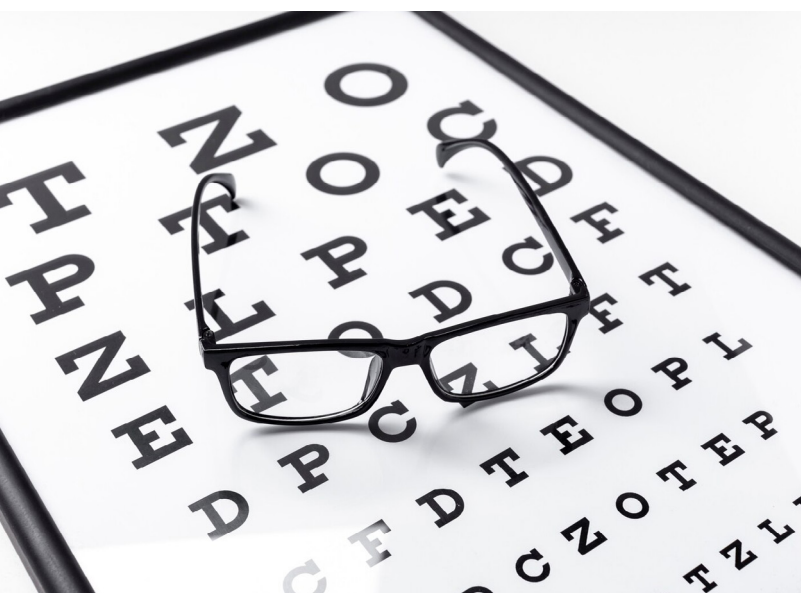


The Member 6/6 Forum concept, introduced in October 2022, is to provide an opportunity for SAOA members to be updated by the SAOA Board and CEO on 6 (six) topical matters at 6h00pm on a weekday, at least on a monthly basis. The 6/6 approach is yet another initiative introduced by the SAOA in an attempt to effectively communicate with our members and address topical matters of relevance.

SAOA WEBINAR SERIES 2023



In accordance with the theme for 2023 which continues to place emphasis on Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry as THE Primary Eye Care Professions, a webinar programme for the year has been introduced for SAOA Members.



The series encompasses a wide range of topics presented by experienced and knowledgeable local and international speakers - experts in their field. Our Webinars this year have been designed to focus on the practical aspects of each topic.

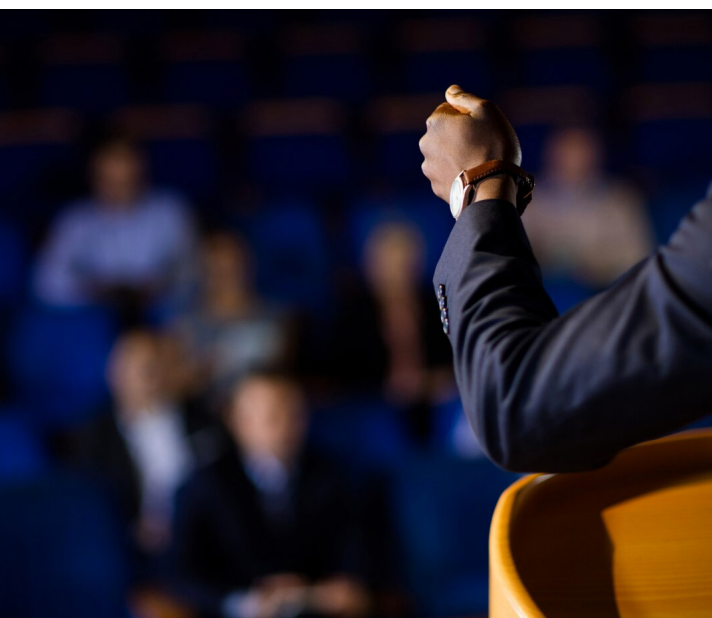
The SAOA will always ensure that our Members DO NOT MISS out on the Webinar Series. For this purpose, recordings are made available in accordance with predetermined protocols.

To view the protocols, [click here](#).

To view an overview of the complete series for 2023, [click here](#).

THE CONFERENCE COMPANY

The Conference Company was established in 1997 by Nina Freysen-Pretorius, after having been employed by one of the first pioneering PCO partnerships within South Africa in 1994. With 23 years in the industry my passion has and continues to be to organise and bring people together, creating memorable projects and making a valuable contribution to the clients whom my team and I serve. We have an office in Cape Town with our head office being in Durban. With a team centered on service delivery excellence, we offer local and global clients highly proficient services. Our vision to be the leading service provider in conference management in South Africa drives every interaction with our clients and keeps us focused on excellence and mutual growth, whatever the unique needs of each project might be. The Conference Company offers a one-stop solution with services encompassing all aspects of conference management. State-of-the-art software resolutions, secure online payment facilities and management provide further peace of mind. In a fast-paced industry, we believe in transparency and openness with clients. By accepting a strong sense of accountability in all our engagements and by remaining credible in a competitive industry, we are proud that clients remain loyal and return year after year and we continue to grow meaningful relationships and forge new ones.



The Conference Company's approach is to form a very close-knit part of the organising committee team and work in a collaborative manner with the committee to ensure the successful outcome of the conference that is being planned.

Our aim is to ensure that we can provide professional, experienced support in the operational, logistical, and financial areas, to the committee. We consider the committee the "brain power" that has the required knowledge as to why delegates would like to attend and participate in the conference. We endeavour to work closely together in a strong, respectful manner with all parties, contributing to the same objective of hosting a well-rounded and successful conference. Our objective at the end of a project is to ensure a successful event that leaves a sustainable legacy.

REGULATIONS RELATING TO CONDUCT OF INQUIRIES INTO ALLEGED UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

On 23 June 2023, **Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Inquiries into Alleged Unprofessional Conduct**, under the Health Professions Act 1974, were published in the Government Gazette. The regulations include amendments relating to the definition of 'Ombudsman,' referring to **Chief Mediator**, his/her role in mediating in alleged cases of 'minor transgressions, processes etc. Of particular significance, is the introduction of an **Appeal** process in situations where a complainant is aggrieved by a decision taken by the Preliminary Committee. To view the Regulations, [click here](#).

COMPENSATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND DISEASES ACT (COIDA) - RECENT AMENDMENTS

On 17 April 2023, the COIDA Amendment Act 10 of 2022 was published, which may have far-reaching implications for employers. The powers of the Compensation Commissioner (or an authorised Licensee) have been expanded, and new measures specifically pertaining to the rehabilitation, re-integration and return to work of occupationally injured /diseased employees. There are also provisions dealing with the transport of employees to the workplace or for work purposes; and accidents occurring outside of SA when an employee is temporarily employed outside of the country. To read more, [click here](#).

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

As stated by Employment and Labour minister Thulas Nxesi, The **Code of Practice on the Management of Exposure to Sars-Cov-2 in the Workplace**, published on 24 June 2022, remains the guiding principle on matters of **health and safety in the workplace and is still the responsibility of all leaders to design an inclusive environment that promotes safety and makes workers comfortable in the workplace**. In essence, this code places a statutory obligation on employers to conduct a risk assessment to determine measures to limit infection and, transmission and mitigate the risk of serious illness or death of an employee or other persons who may be directly affected by the activities of the workplace, such as visitors, patients, and contractors.

To view the Code of Practice, [click here](#).



CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CONFERENCE



SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CROSSWORD BONANZA

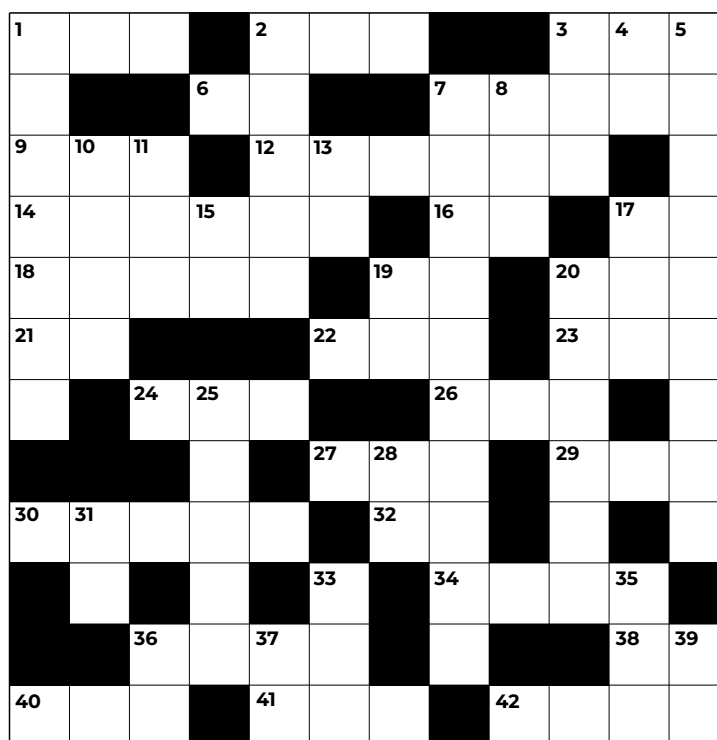
In the anticipation and spirit of celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the SAOA in 2024, a number of activities have been introduced which include the Bonanza Crossword Puzzle below. Answers to the clues generally relate to the SAOA, its Office Bearers as well as SAOA historic milestones, most to be found in this issue of Optiforum. There will be three winners, drawn from a pool of correctly completed entries received. Prizes as described below.

Supplier/Stakeholder: Complimentary Sponsorship package equivalent to the bronze option - excludes travel and accommodation.

Optometrist/Dispensing Option x 2: Full complimentary admission to the Centennial Celebration Conference - excludes travel and accommodation.

To participate in the competition and view the Rules, [click here](#).

DOWNLOAD E-PUZZLE PDF



ACROSS

1. Remove out of respect (3)
2. Namely, the oldest SAOA Member (3)
3. (Celebrated 75-year anniversary in 2023 (1,1,1)
6. Sodium (1,1)
7. Ptosis sign (5)
9. Universal Health for South Africa (1,1,1)
12. Namely, the President (6)
13. Ten of these equates to the centennial celebration (6)
16. In short, a saint (2)
17. Important member of the eye care team, to the letter (1,1)
18. Well prepared SAOA Manager (5)
19. Surgical intervention, abbreviated (2)
20. Personal Administration Measures (1,1,1)
21. In charge of newspaper, in short (2)
20. Lyric poem (3)
23. Vote in favour or f important sense organ (bad spell) (3)

24. In the frontline of care (1,1,1)
25. Zero (3)
26. Information & Communication Services (3)
28. Pressure puff (3)
29. SAOA birth month (5)
31. Titanium, symbolically (1,1)
33. Determines corrective direction (4)
35. Tradition of Excellence (1,1,1,1)
37. Printing measure (2)
39. Co-ordinating Celebration structure (1,1,1)
40. Pull (3)
41. Save the Date – 19 to 21 (4)

DOWN

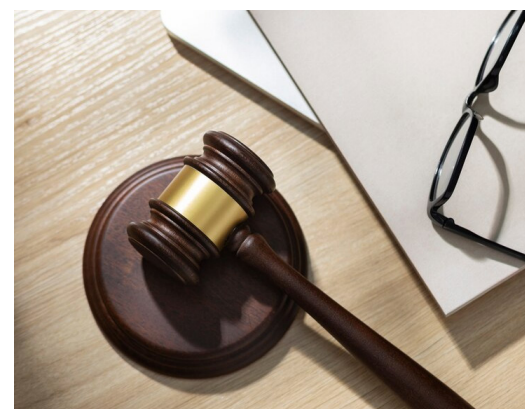
1. Anniversary number (7)
2. Yellow brown hair, or preferably, the Vice President (5)
3. Did not lose (3)
4. Located in Midrand (1,1)

5. The Primary Eye Care Profession (9)
7. Includes consideration of the patient's occupational/vocational/environmental visual requirements (10)
8. In short, skiascope (3)
10. Pay attention to (4)
11. International Classification of Diseases, minus ten (1,1,1)
13. That is (1,1)
14. Not BC (1,1)
17. Not night (3)
19. Doctor of Optometry (1,1)
20. Official residence of an Empire ruler (e.g.) (7)
25. The Regulatory Authority (1,1,1,1,1)
27. Computerised imaging technique (1,1)
30. Computer science, clever but unreal (1,1)
33. Initially, UJ (1,1,1)
34. Department Employment & Labour (1,1,1)
35. Under the skin (1,1)
36. Ocular Therapeutics (1,1)

TAKEALOT

An advertisement placed on the Takealot platform by Pilestone Africa, who describe themselves as colour vision experts, who provide the ‘most efficient and accurate colour-blind test on the internet’ with the promise that the assessment would be concluded in two minutes. Furthermore, where applicable, colour blindness correcting vision lenses would be made available with a 60-day guarantee.

As before, with this issue brought to the attention of Takealot, within days, an engagement was arranged between SAOA and Takealot and relevant documentation provided (Health Professions Act, Regulations, etc.). Once again, justifiably, Takealot acting responsibly, investigated the matter internally and immediately responded, as per sentences below, extracted from their correspondence.



“Following our recent engagements and the additional information you sent, we have now disabled the colour blindness correcting lenses and these are now illegible for sale on our platform. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us should you have any further queries or identify non-compliant products on our platform. We appreciate your assistance in helping improve our product compliance efforts...”

Interestingly, we received a letter from an attorney representing Pilestone seeking clarity. We have not heard from the attorney again.

DISCRIMINATION, OR NOT?

Employees often misunderstand the notion of ‘discrimination’ (which may include harassment) as it applies in South African law. The cases below are examples of this and provide useful explanations by the courts.

Important: Only unfair discrimination is prohibited in our labour law. In order to make a finding of unfair discrimination, the following determinations need to be made, according to the Constitutional Court, and applying the principles in the Employment Equity Act:

- Was there different treatment between the complaining employee and identified comparator employee(s) - this is a factual question.
- If there was differentiation, this will only amount to discrimination if the basis for the differentiation is unlawful, such as the prohibited grounds in s6(1) of the EEA - e.g., race, gender, religion, pregnancy, disability, etc.
- And even if it does constitute discrimination for the above reasons, it could still be fair discrimination, i.e., for justified reasons. Examples of such justification include the inherent requirements of the job, affirmative action, and so on. In such cases, the discrimination will not be unfair and therefore not legally prohibited.

SAOA PARTNERS



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

DRY EYES?



WHEN YOUR ENVIRONMENT BUILDS UP ON YOUR EYES

8

INTENSIVE DRY EYE RELIEF¹ SYMPTOMS

- DRYNESS
- BURNING
- IRRITATION
- STINGING
- SORENESS
- ITCHINESS
- TIREDNESS
- GRITTIENESS

WORLD'S No. 1 EYE CARE BRAND³

1. Reference: G Torkildsen, et al. Evaluation of a new artificial tear formulation for the management of tear film stability and visual function in patients with dry eye. NCT03183089; June 9, 2017.

2. Tear shield technology (Trademark) trademarkelite.com/europe/trademark/trademark-detail/018305456/TEARSHIELD-TECHNOLOGY.

3. Source: Euromonitor International Limited; Consumer Health Eye Care definition, retail value share, 2021 data.

www.rohtoeyecare.co.za



THANKYOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT



Telephone: 011 805 4517

Fax: 011 805 3882

Email: marketing@saoa.co.za

Physical Address: 561 Nupen Crescent Halfway House, Ext 12