The Commonwealth Pharmacists Association Conference

The combined conference, hosted by the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA), the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC) and the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA), and our Annual General Meeting (AGM) have now gone by. We were all looking forward to these events, especially to the former, with much anticipation. I hope I am not wrong in assuming that, by now, you have heard all about it. If not, please ask your representatives, who attended as councillors, to report to you what happened.

As we bask in the glory of successfully hosting a very enjoyable and educational conference, it is appropriate that, on behalf of the whole membership, we acknowledge and congratulate all those that were involved in organising the event. It is always risky to mention people by name, lest one omits others. However, I would like to make special mention of Andy Gray, the convener of the academic organising committee. Thank you, Andy and your team.

A landmark conference

This was a landmark conference, not only because of the international component, but also because for the first time ever, the pharmacy profession benefited from the active participation of both the SAPC and the PSSA. The feedback that we have had has been very positive, and the contributions of both councillors and council staff were well received. Pharmacists also relished the opportunity to interact with representatives of Council. So thank you, Pharmacy Council. I hope that this was just the beginning of many more such events.

Pharmacy Week 2011

Pharmacy Week 2011 is upon us. The theme for this year is “Towards quality care together”. This is an event that we endorse and promote, together with the SAPC and the National Department of Health. As a professional body, we should play a major role in all the activities countrywide. I therefore urge all members to get involved with various activities and collaborate with our partners wherever possible. This is happening in some areas: I am aware that pharmacists at Tshwane Municipality are planning some activities involving various stakeholders, for instance. Don’t we claim that we have a national footprint? Let the PSSA be visible everywhere in the country.

The role of the National Executive Committee

It is a new PSSA year, and there is a new PSSA National Executive Committee (Exco). It is important that you, as PSSA member, know what your rights and responsibilities are when it comes to the Exco. Exco members are there because you put them there, either actively, by voting for them at a branch or sector meeting, or passively, by letting someone else vote.

The people that you have sent to Exco are there as your representatives, so they will act on your behalf and should make sure that you are informed of national activities. Comprehensive information is sent to Exco members, not for their own personal use, but for them to communicate and deliberate with all their constituencies. This needs to be done at branch and at sector level. Having done this, the Exco member will return fully informed to the Exco meeting. If it is not happening, it is your right and your duty to ask your Exco members to give you feedback on their involvement in the Exco.

The strategic plan

In my culture, a person that has passed on is not dead as long as his name is still spoken about. To keep the strategic plan alive, we have to talk about it, lest it dies in our minds and souls. In my report to General Council, I indicated that during the first two years of the strategic plan implementation, we focused on internal activities such as building bridges amongst ourselves, our different branches and sectors, in order to face the world as a unified, strong body. While I concede that we have not yet reached that optimal “toenadering,” we have made significant strides in the right direction.

Nonetheless, the time has come for us to move forward and progress the implementation process to the external environment of the PSSA. Southern Gauteng CPS has taken the first steps, with preparation of a “draft” advertisement that was shared with us at the AGM. It is just the beginning of what is to come. Work with Talk2Us, the company assisting us with the marketing of the PSSA and pharmacy, is still in progress. We should have concrete activities to communicate shortly. We remain one body with many valuable parts. Let us make sure that the people who use our services are aware of how valuable our service is.

Dr Sybil Seoka