Two years ago, when I set sail as SAAHIP President, the task at hand seemed overwhelming and without end. Yet, as I write this report, time has been too short. Be that as it may, sometimes we make the process more complicated than we need to. The national executive committee (NEC) with whom I was blessed to work has held me firm and high, and I am certain that my successor will be supported in equal measure. I say this to the president elect: We will never make a journey of a thousand miles by fretting about how long it will take, or how hard it will be. We make the journey by taking each day step by step, and then repeating it again and again, until we reach our destination.

I am very proud of what we have accomplished this past year, and know that it will serve as a firm basis upon which we, and those taking over after us, can build, for years to come. Our focus areas, as defined last year, and the progress that we have made thus far, are presented below.

**Focus areas**

**Focus area 1: Services (Mpumalanga and Limpopo Branches)**

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Get involved at primary healthcare level
- Migrate the direct responsibility of medical-related products away from pharmacists
- Establish pharmacist-initiated therapy.

Progress is as follows:

- The Limpopo Branch is actively engaging the Department of Health on the appointment of pharmacy supervisors and post community service pharmacists
- A study is being undertaken to determine the difference between “surgical” and “medical” devices in the South African setting
- All activities in which pharmacists are involved are also being investigated.

**Focus area 2: Policies (Western Cape Branch, Vice President and Mrs L Osman)**

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Write pharmacy policy as established leaders
- A new service delivery requirement of a 24-hour service provides a unique opportunity for SAAHIP to act proactively
- Comment on draft policy and legislation.

Progress is as follows:

- A process is underway to identify a facility that will be used as a pilot site for a 24-hour service study. Staff requirements and the cost implication will be investigated, among other factors
- A subcommittee has been formed to manage and drive this initiative, together with those responsible.

**Focus area 3: Training (Southern Gauteng Branch)**

The identified strategic objective is to:

- Become a pharmacoeconomic expert.

Progress is as follows:

- The possibility of a health and pharmacoeconomic workshop or podium presentation as a potential conference initiative is being investigated.

**Focus area 4: Resources (Eastern Cape Branch)**

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Utilise the latest technology-supporting services required by National Health Insurance (NHI) and National Core Standards
- Employ and utilise a dedicated administrative aid to actively interact with government
- Utilise expertise, knowledge and experience to provide clinical information to our members.

Progress is as follows:

- The Eastern Cape Branch is managing the process of employing technology, together with SAAHIP’s established branch structures to drive initiatives, e.g. surveys
- Different options have been investigated with respect to an administrative aid. After presentation to the NEC, it was decided to procure the services of an ad hoc administrator for specific projects and/or drives, e.g. NHI.
Focus area 5: Relations

Specific focus area: Presidential Committee

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Utilise SAHIP’s political recognition to actively engage and interact with the government
- Utilise SAHIP’s network to address the shortfall of new pharmacists that are available to the hospital sector.

Progress is as follows:

- SAHIP’s presidential committee has been successfully engaging with organisations and institutions, including government departments, to further the respective initiatives of SAHIP and hospital pharmacists in general.

Specific focus area: Broader PSSA (Northern Gauteng Branch)

The identified strategic objective is to:

- Exploit SAHIP’s diverse demographic representation and functional communication network to move closer to PSSA at both branch and national level.

Progress is as follows:

- This focus area will assist PSSA with respect to rational antibiotic use
- Branches that require assistance to bolster their relationship with the PSSA branches in their region or province will be supported.

Specific focus area: Recruitment and Marketing Branch (Northern Gauteng, Southern Gauteng and North West Branches)

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Employ expertise, knowledge and experience to modernise the “association” package for young potential members
- Employ all SAHIP’s strengths that make it unique to attract members from other similar organisations.

Progress is as follows:

- A general marketing presentation has been circulated to all branches for marketing purposes
- The focus in 2015 will be on the development of a workshop for interns.

Specific focus area: Benefits (Northern Cape and Free State Branch)

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Employ the SAHIP Conference to provide growth and exposure for our members
- Utilise SAHIP’s functional communication network to overcome difficulties that our wide demographic spread within provinces and regions might present
- Employ potential growth and exposure for SAHIP members to address and overcome the general apathy experienced.

Progress is as follows:

- The website will be investigated in its entirety with respect to functionality. This will include the layout of the home page and others, as well as access options to specific pages
- The process of loading CPDs onto the website has taken longer than expected. However, it will be done during the course of 2015, as part of the revamp initiative
- A website subcommittee has been established, with national representivity that will drive usage and technical support of the website.

Specific focus area: Conditions of Service (Mr L van der Merwe)

The identified strategic objective is to:

- Provide general support regarding all conditions of service of hospital and institutional pharmacists and support personnel.

Progress is as follows:

- General human resource support will be given to SAHIP members, as in the past
- The placement of prospective community service pharmacists has been a recurring issue. It has been decided to carve this matter out of the conditions of service focus area, and to elevate it to its own focus area status.

Specific focus area: National Health Insurance (Ms T Pillaye and President)

The identified strategic objective is to:

- Drive and effect the influence of SAHIP on NHI.

Progress is as follows:

- Cooperation between SAHIP and the National Department of Health is underway concerning all matters.

Specific focus area: SAHIP Annual Conference (KwaZulu-Natal Inland and Coastal and Western Cape Branches)

Identified strategic objectives are to:

- Plan, coordinate and execute the National SAHIP Conference for 2014 and 2015
- Plan, coordinate and execute the National SAHIP Conference for 2016 and 2017.

Progress is as follows:

- The 2015 conference is in full force and is being managed actively
- Handover arrangements have already been made. The Western Cape Branch has been involved in the arrangements and management of this year’s conference, in preparation for next year’s hosting
- A special word of thanks goes to Viv Viljoen and the team from Aspen for overseeing this changeover.

I trust that the above progress feedback on the focus areas is acceptable to the General Council. As always, the SAHIP NEC welcomes any constructive criticism and advice from our members.
Word of thanks

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the SAAHIP NEC members with whom I have had the privilege of working for the past two years. It has been my honour to serve with you. You have my heart and my support.

A very special word of thanks to Carol Lohrentz and the KwaZulu-Natal Inland and Coastal teams who have worked tirelessly to make this year’s conference a success. Again, I extend a warm personal thank you to Viv Viljoen, who has yet again contributed immeasurably to the success of this conference. In equal fashion, an honest and humble thank you is extended to Andy Gray for his assistance, availability and advice throughout the past two years.

I thank every member of the trade for supporting SAAHIP in the way that you do year after year. It is a fact that our conference would not be nearly as successful as it is every year were it not for your loyal and ongoing support.

My final word of thanks is extended to you, the loyal SAAHIP conference goer and loyal member, for your personal contribution to the SAAHIP family over the past year. Allow me to interpret the Ubuntu principle in SAAHIP terms as “SAAHIP is because of you”.

I pray that the 2015 SAAHIP Conference will be as successful as it is meant to be, and that the fond memories created here will stay with you for many years to come.

Soli Deo gloria!