



**SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS**

# REGISTER NOW

**EMPERORS PALACE  
18 - 20 July 2024**



In celebration of our centennial anniversary, the SAOA, is hosting a mega-conference featuring local and international speakers, workshops, networking, an expansive exhibition, a **Gala-Dinner** and **Awards Ceremony**.

[VIEW CONFERENCE DETAILS](#)

# OPTIFORUM

OPTIFORUM JULY TO DECEMBER 2023



**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.

## INTRODUCTION

# PHRASES, QUOTES AND TERMINOLOGIES AS WE ENTER 2024

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### WORDS

**Artificial Intelligence:** The modelling of human mental functions by computer programmes.

**Flashover:** When a fire in the room becomes a room on fire.

**Hallucinate:** To seem to see, hear or smell something that does not exist. If an artificial intelligence hallucinates, it produces false information.

**Permacrisis:** A long and sustained period of great difficulty and confusion.

### QUOTES

*“Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan.”*

*“Don’t count the days but make the days count.”*



## MESSAGE FROM SAOA PRESIDENT

Greetings Colleagues,

This past year (2023) witnessed the SAOA representing the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry at various levels, which included opposition to the proposed certificate of need by Government, the application by the BHF to be exempt from the competition laws, the relaxation of the ethical rules to allow appointment of practitioners by non-registered parties, etc. In addition, the SAOA contributed to the debates pertaining to the NHI and medical device regulations. To view the positions adopted by the SAOA in recent times, [click here](#).

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

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

*Walt Disney: “You can design and create and build the most wonderful place in the world. But it takes people to make the dream a reality.”*

2023 has been a remarkable year for the SAOA, embracing 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 enter 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 quote above, attributed to Walt Disney, has great relevance. 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

CEO REPORT IN NUMBERS:

Number of Years	100	SAOA Committees	10
Members on SAOA Books	1800	Number of persons within the SAOA Structure	42
Focus Groups Held	23	Board Update Meetings held	45
Webinars Held	21	Regional Representative Update Meetings held	9
Optiforums prepared	2	Historic Snippets prepared and presented	36
Number of Newsflash Submissions	46	Number Presidents – 99 years	42
Directors on SAOA Board	7		

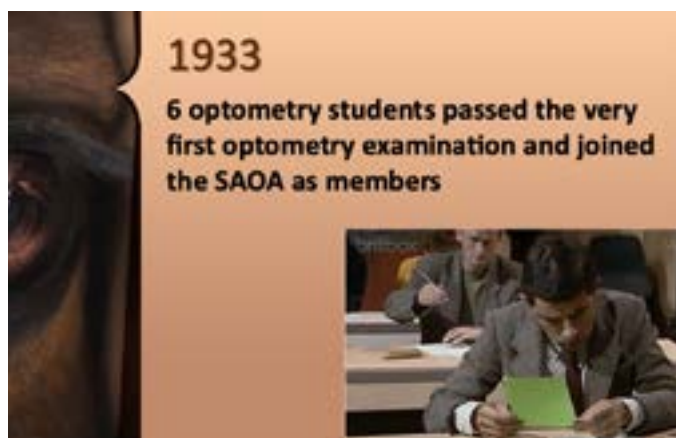


## 100 YEARS



**From a Tradition of Excellence,  
the Force of the Future**

On 31 March 1924, the SAOA was born in the boardroom of the Science and Technical Club, in Johannesburg, Gauteng. What an incredible journey it has been, a roller coaster ride, at times, but in 2023, we stand strong and steadfast, and ready to negotiate the next 100 years. Indeed, from a tradition of excellence, the force of the future.



To view snippets published to date, [click here](#).

## KEY EVENTS:

### JULY TO DECEMBER 2023

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<b>12 JUNE</b>	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA) PASSED THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (NHI) BILL.
<b>22 JUNE</b>	SAOA/PBODO BILATERAL MEETING.
<b>23 JUNE</b>	REGULATIONS PUBLISHED RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF INQUIRIES INTO ALLEGED UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
<b>3 TO 7 JULY</b>	CORPORATE WELLNESS WEEK
<b>12 JULY</b>	FOCUS GROUP- MPUMALANGA
<b>18 JULY</b>	NELSON MANDELA DAY
<b>20 JULY</b>	ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS FOR VISION AND EYE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS
<b>24 JULY</b>	FOCUS GROUP: NORTHERN CAPE
<b>31 JULY</b>	FOCUS GROUP: NORTHWEST (1).
<b>1 AUGUST</b>	NATIONAL WOMENS MONTH
<b>2 AUGUST</b>	FOCUS GROUP: NORTHWEST (2).
<b>3 AUGUST</b>	WEBINAR- COMPETITION LAW UPDATE: A HEALTHCARE PERSPECTIVE
<b>4 AUGUST</b>	THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, IN CONSULTATION SOUTH AFRICAN HEALTH PRODUCTS REGULATORY AUTHORITY (SAHPRA) PUBLISHED PROPOSED REGULATIONS REGARDING FEES PAYABLE FOR LICENSURE AND DISTRIBUTORSHIP OF MEDICAL DEVICES FOR COMMENT.
<b>7 AUGUST</b>	CMS APPEAL HEARING RE CLAWBACKS BY FEDHEALTH
<b>7 AUGUST</b>	FOCUS GROUP: FREE STATE.
<b>9 AUGUST</b>	NATIONAL WOMENS DAY.
<b>12 AUGUST</b>	INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY.
<b>14 AUGUST</b>	FOCUS GROUP: FREE STATE (2)
<b>25 AUGUST</b>	DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO MEDICAL DEVICE REGULATIONS PUBLISHED FOR COMMENT
<b>31 AUGUST</b>	WEBINAR- THE MANAGEMENT/REHABILITATION OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ASSOCIATED WITH NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS
<b>4 SEPTEMBER</b>	TELEHEALTH GUIDELINES FOR OPTOMETRY PUBLISHED
<b>7 SEPTEMBER</b>	WEBINAR- THERAPEUTIC STRATEGIES AND THE OPTOMETRIST.
<b>15 SEPTEMBER</b>	SAOA RESPONDES TO NHI BILL.

<b>18 SEPTEMBER</b>	NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS.
<b>19 SEPTEMBER</b>	GUIDELINES FOR OUTREACH ACTIVITIES PUBLISHED
<b>24 SEP - 18 OCT</b>	EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH.
<b>1 - 31 OCTOBER</b>	NATIONAL TRANSPORT MONTH
<b>5 OCTOBER</b>	WEBINAR- CURRENT RESEARCH IN OPTOMETRY AND DISPENSING OPTICIANRY
<b>6 OCTOBER</b>	COMPLIANCE NOTICE PUBLISHED IN TERMS OF SECTION 83(3)(D) OF THE PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 2 OF 2000.
<b>12 OCTOBER</b>	WORLD SIGHT DAY
<b>13 OCTOBER</b>	HIGH COURT DISMISSED AN APPLICATION BY THE CMS TO INTERDICT NETCARE PLUS FROM SELLING PRE-PAID HEALTH CARE VOUCHERS.
<b>16 - 20 OCTOBER</b>	SCHOOL HEALTH WEEK
<b>17 - 20 OCTOBER</b>	AFRICA HEALTH CONFERENCE
<b>19 OCTOBER</b>	WEBINAR- COPING WITH STRESS IN PRACTICE.
<b>25 OCTOBER</b>	HIGH COURT PRONOUNCES THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE BASIC CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT ACT) DEALING WITH MATERNITY- AND OTHER TYPES OF PARENTAL LEAVE, ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND ACCORDINGLY INVALID.
<b>2 NOVEMBER</b>	WEBINAR - BEST PRACTICE IN OPTICAL DISPENSING.
<b>14 NOVEMBER</b>	WORLD DIABETES DAY
<b>16 NOVEMBER</b>	WEBINAR: THE DIABETIC PATIENT: A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH.
<b>17 NOVEMBER</b>	AMENDMENTS TO HPCSA ETHICAL RULES PUBLISHED
<b>27 NOVEMBER.</b>	CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION STAKEHOLDER MEETING- EMPERORS PALACE
<b>29 NOVEMBER</b>	CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION STAKEHOLDER MEETING-VIRTUAL.
<b>30 NOVEMBER</b>	WEBINAR – PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS.
<b>6 DECEMBER</b>	NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES (NCOP) VOTED IN FAVOUR OF THE NHI BILL
<b>7 DECEMBER</b>	SAOA OBJECTS TO AMENDMENT TO ETHICAL RULES WHICH PERMITS EMPLOYMENT OF REGISTERED PRACTITIONER BY ANY EMPLOYER.



## 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](#).

## THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

South Africa is one step closer to implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI) system, after the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) voted in favour of the NHI Bill on Wednesday 6 December 2023. But it will be a long and challenging battle before the Bill becomes law as legal action is almost certain to follow soon. To read more, [click here](#).

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 HHI Bill. To view the SAOA position re the NHI Bill, [click here](#).



## INDEMNITY INSURANCE SAOA

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](mailto:lauren@cfpbrokers.co.za) or Harry Rosen via [ceo@saoa.co.za](mailto:ceo@saoa.co.za).



## PARENTAL LEAVE - IMPORTANT CHANGES

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On 25 October 2023, the High Court pronounced that the current provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (and the Unemployment Insurance Fund Act) dealing with Maternity- and other types of Parental leave, are unconstitutional and accordingly invalid. The basis for this finding was that it is unfairly discriminatory on the basis of the rights to equality and dignity.

From a legal perspective, this pronouncement of unconstitutionality has to be confirmed by the Constitutional Court to be effective; and if so, the legislation then needs to be changed accordingly. The Hight Court has determined a period of 2 years for the Department of Employment and Labour to do so. However, as an interim measure whilst this process is happening, the Court has further determined that, with immediate effect, all parents should be entitled to 4 consecutive months' parental leave (whether birth- / adoptive / surrogacy) which must be covered by the UIF. BUT, with the proviso that the 4 months must be used collectively / shared between the parents of the child. Between the parents, they can then have 4 months' parental leave (covered by UIF) and they can decide how to share this period between them. To read more, [click here](#).

## MAKE MYOPIA MANAGEMENT A PART OF YOUR PRACTICE TODAY!

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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

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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](#).

## SAOA BOARD UPDATE

### THANK YOU: DOLLARS AND MARNA – MUCH RESPECT

On 18 November 2023, a Notice of Nomination was disseminated to SAOA members in good standing, inviting all to nominate colleagues to serve on the Board, due to two vacancies created as the result of the tenures of two senior directors coming to an end.



#### DOLLARS BOLOKA

has served on the Board, initially in the capacity of Finance Director but, importantly, Dollars has served as SAOA President for two terms. As at the AGM next year, Dollars will have completed his term (one year) as Immediate Past President. Due to restrictions in the SAOA MOI, Dollars could not be available for re-election.



#### MARNA PIETERSE

has served as a member of the SAOA Board in a number of capacities, including Director responsible for Special Projects, and more recently, Finance Director and co-chair of the Coding Committee. Of significance, Marna has served as SAOA Vice President for two terms. In accordance with the SAOA MOI, Marna could not be available for re-election.

The invaluable efforts of Dollars and Marna, in their respective capacities, are greatly appreciated. Thankfully both Dollars and Marna are not lost to the SAOA, as both have agreed to continue in their roles serving on the Private Practice and Coding Committees, respectively.

## 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 (June to December 2023) 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](#).

#### KEY PERFORMANCES AREAS

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





## THE WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY (WCO) AFRICA GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVE

**Background:** Over the period 2021-2023, the WCO embarked on the process of reforms for the WCO board structure. The final outcome was that each of the six regions will have one geographic representative to be directly nominated and elected by the WCO members in good standing in that region.

**The current representative:** Patrick Mawila was nominated unopposed in mid-year 2023 by the SAOA to be the WCO African geographic representative and he occupies the role for the term ending in mid-2025. The WCO reform processes is an ongoing one, currently going for the multi-year strategic planning workshop.

**The responsibilities:** The role of the Geographic Representative is to represent the interests of the WCO by way of understanding and coordinating the members of the WCO in the region. The representative is part of the WCO board which steers the direction and activities of the WCO. In essence the Geographic Representative is the face of the WCO in the region. WCO members in the region are able to make reports submissions, suggestions and enquiries through the Geographic Representative and is then a seamless representation and advocacy to the board.



**PATRICK MAWILA**

## FINANCE COMMITTEE COMMENT

### PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE:

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



**BIGNOCIA MASINGE**

### 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.

### 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.

### 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 regarding the rural allowance 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 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 Xhosa, Sepedi and IsiZulu. Sharing these pamphlets will also make a huge difference to the communities concerned.

## 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:

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.

### 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), Thivasha Reddy.

### THEME:

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

### KEY ACTIVITIES:

#### 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 focus group campaign throughout the country in order get a better understanding of the need of the optometrists in those areas. This will serve as the groundwork for future focus groups.

### 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 designed a myopia management motivation form to submit to medical aids, where applicable.

### 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 primary aim of the Committee is to keep members updated and ensure that the public are educated on a deliberate, planned and sustained basis.

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 has been used independently across all media and in most correspondence to herald the coming of an iconic 100th year of the SAOA'S existence.

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.

To view an overview of the Marketing campaigns during 2023, [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**

## EYE CARE AWARENESS MONTH 2023



### 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 attempted to illustrate to the world how important it is to #LoveYourEyes. This was our opportunity to motivate employers everywhere to implement change.

**WORLD SIGHT DAY** was commemorated on Thursday 12 October this year, in accordance with theme #Love Your Eyes at Work. Nevertheless, the spirit of WSD, and indeed Eye Care Awareness Month (ECAM), embraces the principles of both awareness as well as the provision of eye care to those in need. In this regard, the SAOA was at the forefront with our own initiatives and demonstrative support for other stakeholders which has included:



#### TELEVISION APPEARANCE: SAOA PRESIDENT

SAOA President Nivien Subramany was interviewed on SA Morning (Channel 403) on Thursday morning, 12 October 2023, having fielded a number of questions relating to eye health and vision care. To view the interview, [click here](#).

#### BIG WALK FOR SIGHT: MEERENDAL WINE ESTATE



130 (one hundred and thirty) people from different 'walks of life' participated in the 5 Km SAOA Big Walk for Sight which took place at the Meerendal Wine Estate, Cape Town on WSD. The aim of the SAOA Big Walk for Sight was to focus attention on the importance of eye care, primarily in the workplace with the intent to 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.





## ROLL OF HONOUR

[Click here](#) to view 2023 roll

## 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, [click here](#).



## SAOA RESPONSE TO DRAFT MEDICAL DEVICE REGULATIONS

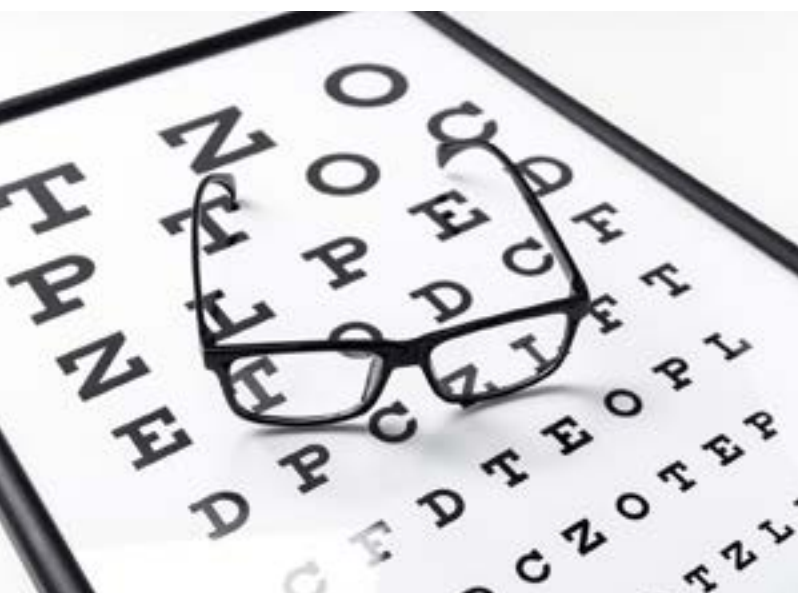
Comments in response to the draft regulations, as published in the Government Gazette on 25 August 2023, are to be submitted to the Minister of Health by 25 November 2023. Whilst the regulations have particular relevance for distributors and manufacturers of medical devices, as well as wholesalers, sections of the regulations are significant from the perspective of the professions of Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry; in this regard, the SAOA has addressed issues such as online sale of devices (contact lenses), the importance of distributors and manufacturers being licensed, SAHPRA capacity and skills to accommodate their responsibilities as a regulatory authority, the effective enforcement of the regulations, amongst other matters. To access the SAOA response, [click here](#).



## 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 introduced for SOA Members.



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

The SOA 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](#).

## FAREWELL TO COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE PASSED



LERATO LERUTLA

## 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](#).

## 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](#).

## 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](#).



## REGISTER NOW FOR SAOA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CONFERENCE



**Registrations for the SAOA Centennial Celebration Conference scheduled to take place on 18, 19, 20 July 2024 are now open.** Over the course of three days, our comprehensive educational programme will offer delegates the opportunity to attend presentations, workshops, panel discussions, and poster presentations, all of which will be CPD accredited. Whether you choose to attend all three days or select specific days, you will undoubtedly benefit from the wealth of knowledge and expertise shared.

The conference will also feature an expansive exhibition area showcasing the latest advancements in technology from various suppliers and stakeholders in the eye care industry. **Importantly, the conference will provide opportunities for delegates to network and socialize with their peers and industry leaders. To register [click here](#)**

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CROSSWORD: WINNING ENTRIES

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. Answers to the clues generally related to the SAOA, its Office Bearers as well as SAOA historic milestones, most to be found in January to June issue of Optiforum. Entries were to be received by 12 January 2024.

**We are pleased to announce the winners of the Crossword Puzzle, who were drawn from correct entries received:**



### SUPPLIER/STAKEHOLDER:

The Green Company

### PRIZE:

Complimentary Sponsorship package equivalent to the bronze option - excludes travel and accommodation.

### OPTOMETRIST/ DISPENSING OPTICIAN:

Prof Paul Ramkissoon and Mrs Cornell Le Roux

### PRIZE:

Full complimentary admission to the Centennial Celebration Conference - excludes travel and accommodation.

## 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



## CONCLUSION



From a Tradition of Excellence,  
the Force of the Future

**Mumtaz Arbee:** *"As an optom in my own capacity, I would not have achieved this..I am in awe of the selfless efforts, absolute dedication and support I have received from the SAOA. You guys are inspiring"*







# THANKYOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED  
SUPPORT



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