



# SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED PHYTOTHERAPISTS

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## **SAARP Meeting Minutes** **Held online on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**Chairperson: Dr Sonia Couto**

### **Opening and Welcome**

#### **Administration**

Members Present: Dr Sonia Couto (Chairperson), Dr Caren Hauptfleisch (Vice-Chairperson), Dr Catherine van Dorsten (Secretary), Dr Sarah le Grange (Treasurer), Dr Sanien de Beer, Dr Tammi O'Flynn, Dr Connie Meyer, Dr Wendy Staak, Dr Tammi O'Flynn, Dr James Campbell, Dr Carla Boswell, and Melissa Goodall.

Apologies: Dr Barbara Lewis.

#### **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were ratified by Dr ??? and seconded by Dr ???.

#### **Announcements**

There were no announcements made at this meeting.

#### **Feedback on Medical Aid Tariffs**

Dr Sonia Couto and Dr Leonie Curtolo have met with Dr Neil Gower. Earlier this year Dr Sonia Couto created a draft questionnaire for practitioners pertaining to their prices. According to Dr Neil Gower this style of information gathering has not been appropriate since the early 1990's. A more quantitative approach is required. He suggests the following 3 stages:

Phase 1: Cost survey. This would include:

- design of an online platform that will easily collect information from practitioners to whom the survey is sent;
- collation of the information and data into an analysis spreadsheet;
- calculation of the tariffs associated per code; and
- provision of all information for inspection and verification by an independent auditor / for independent verification.

Phase 1 could be performed by Neil Dr Gower at the rough cost of R48,000

Phase 2: Independent Verification. This may be completed by an accounting firm contracted by SAARP to review all submitted data and to verify whether the answers listed have been a) submitted by the practitioner concerned, b) are in fact true.

Phase 3: Medical Aids. SAARP would need to undertake discussions with each medical aid it wished to seek the inclusion of its benefits with.

His experience with the Homeopathic association was that an estimated R150,000 was spent 15 years ago. While our association has different parameters and may differ with costs, this figure is important to keep in mind.

It was then asked by the NEC, what is the benefit of going through this process and this was the response of Dr Neil Gower:

“In many years the proportion of repayments for homeopath services from medical savings vs risk pool was 35:65.

2004: total paid out for homeopath’s services (bearing in mind at this time that services were slashed and scheme reorganised) R 18 million

2006: R 20,5 million

2009: R 34 million

A variety of factors play into the above but the formalisation of an existing benefit meant more medical aids covered the services and practitioners also engaged in practices that sought medical reimbursement by claim forms and contracting in etc. Most important is that the number of visits per provider dropped between 2004-2006 and this rose up from 2006 to 2009 again backed by an engaged professional association, marketing, standardised identities. The increase in payment is not just one action alone it is a multitude of factors.”

The way forward is to decide if we as a group of Phytotherapists would like to see these changes. Then, over the next year we will individually need to devise ways to raise money. This could be through frequent online paid lectures to the public, an increased yearly fee, a large conference. However, it is of utmost importance that everyone participates in this process as we cannot provide this service as the NEC alone. We can make a final decision about the way forward at the AGM.

### **Life After Graduation**

This document was sent after the last meeting. However, we have only had one new suggestion added to the document. We have had feedback from Dr Simone Amann who said that as a recent graduate, this document was incredibly valuable to her. It is worth taking a few moments to review and add to this document so that the next generation of Phytotherapists may feel equipped in these uncertain times.

### **Reveal of Logo and Update on Website**

The website basics are finished. Over the course of the next week the NEC members will be reviewing the layout and written content in order to give feedback to the website developer. The new website is very close to being finished, and so, to those who haven’t sent their photos and information please do so as soon as possible.

The logo stays true to the old logo but has an updated look. The final choice of Sutherlandia, an important indigenous herb, was made by the members and it tells a unique story of a herb with a long history of use that has been found to be of value clinically in its whole form.

### **Constitution**

The constitution is complete. However, we are still working on an Addendum document. Here some additions will be appended to the constitution as supplemental additions (codicils), thus changing the frame of government without altering the existing text of the document. Here some rules and processes

may may change or be updated by the NEC or as decided by the Members and the NEC at a meeting. For example, the WhatsApp group rules.

### **Updates from the Registrar Regarding UJ and CPD**

We all received an email from the Registrar about the availability of the Phytotherapy course at the University of Johannesburg. For those who haven't looked at the link, the course is a 2 year post graduate diploma course valued at R36,000. Applicants must be suitably registered health care providers (more information on the website). There is a maximum of 20 applicants per year.

An email was sent regarding online CPD that can be accrued through the Medical Practice Counselling Platform. For those who have not followed this link, it requires that you set up a profile and then you can choose various CPD accredited online course. Most of them cost a fee.

### **Pamphlets and 'Practitioner of the Month' Campaign**

A reminder to those who would like pamphlets, please message Dr Caren Hauptfleisch directly or via the [phytotherapists@gmail.com](mailto:phytotherapists@gmail.com) address to organize the delivery of these pamphlets.

A reminder to contact us if you would like us to promote your practice on our social media platforms.

### **Our Action Statement**

Our action statement was discussed at the end of the meeting. Examples of action statements from other associations in the UK, Australia and New Zealand were looked at. The objectives and functions of SAARP, as the only officially recognised Phytotherapy association in South Africa, were reviewed and it was decided that the important points to consider were what we do as an association, as well as individuals, and also what we do for the public (helping the public find Registered Phytotherapists, diagnostics important, etc.). The following suggestion was decided on and needs to be considered further by all members:

**Representing Registered Phytotherapists who legally provide diagnostics, individualised herbal medicine with nutrition and lifestyle advice and preventative healthcare.**

### **Any Other Business**

The WhatsApp group has, over the COVID19 lockdown period, shared essential information to the Members – it is part of the essential function of this important tool. The NEC would like to remind members of the WhatsApp rules. They have been adjusted considering one or two WhatsApp incidences:

“The SAARP Whatsapp group is a closed forum and messages shared within this group may not be disseminated to a third party.

The objective of this group is to support practitioners in the practice of Phytotherapy.

It is solely for sharing information about herbal medicine, case studies, resources pertaining to clinical practice and/or educational resources, and any relevant updates from medically-related institutions such as AHPCSA, SAHPRA, WHO, etc.

Going forward this group will be entirely secular and apolitical.

Furthermore, the promotion of individual enterprises is not applicable to this group. Unless the promotion is specifically of an educational or profession-promoting nature and permission has been granted by the Chairperson.

Lastly, this WhatsApp group functions as a speedy channel for the NEC to relay information to its members.”

Now that the NEC has managed to tick off a lot of 'to do' items within the association. We can start looking forward and becoming more visionary towards future events, etc., that may be held for the public. What would you like to see from SAARP going forward? Please can everyone think about these things

and finalise what they would like to see from SAARP before the next AGM so that we can create a 2021 plan that reflects what our member's want and need.

It was suggested by Dr Tammi O'Flynn that online should be on weekdays rather than weekends – this was supported by Dr Carla Boswell.

It was suggested by Dr Catherine van Dorsten that we discuss/present case studies in the time remaining after meetings are concluded.

### **Next Meeting**

There are no more meetings planned for this year. We would like to suggest a special purpose lecture that takes on a practical format and is used as a meet and greet/year end informal gathering, depending on how the pandemic is affecting the country. An email will be sent out about the best dates for the whole group for this.