

A message from your new SADA president

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Dr Pusetso Moipolai



Dear Colleagues,

It is an honour to be addressing you as the new (well not so new anymore!) President of the South African Dental Association (SADA). It is a position I never expected to hold when I first joined the Association in the 1990s, but one in which I take great pride in accepting. I joined the SADA because I believed I could both add value and derive value, networking with like-minded professionals.

Growing up, dentistry was not on my radar. My parents had aspirations for me to become a doctor due to my aptitude for science in school. When applying for a scholarship, I naturally selected Medicine as my first choice. On the day my application was submitted, I decided to select Dentistry as my second choice. The truth is that I had never even been to a dentist before! I had no first-hand experience with the profession.

Many years down the line, I am still so grateful to have been chosen for Dentistry. Unlike practicing Medicine, it is a profession that offers the perfect work-life balance while still being really rewarding in terms of having a positive impact.

I would like to thank the members who have entrusted me with the responsibilities associated with this new role. It is my commitment to you that I will continue to serve the Association to the best of my ability and to stay focused on driving the SADA mission: promoting the interests of our members and - above all - encouraging accessible oral healthcare for all South Africans.

I ask that you never hesitate to reach out to me on president@sada.co.za to communicate any challenges you face within the industry. I have an open-door policy and appreciate the feedback of others driving the agenda of our profession. I promise to always do my very best in addressing the issues you divulge to me.

I would also like to extend a sincere thanks to my predecessor, Dr Roux Vermeulen, as well as the SADA National Council and the Board and Management Team. Your leadership to-date has laid the foundation for today's transformation to be possible. The Association's success

is largely your doing and so, the current leadership team aims to build on your legacy.

I believe that what makes a good leader are the abilities to listen, pay attention to detail, and focus on the job at hand. These are qualities I aim to bring to the table as SADA President.

I hope to use this opportunity to further the significant progress made by SADA in terms of structural transformation. I also want to see the organisation grow to become more inclusive across oral healthcare professions. The majority of our members are in private practice.

However, I believe that it would make SADA more powerful and accessible if we also gave a voice to others in the industry – such as academic and public professionals with alternative expertise.

What has become clear to me during my time as a dental professional, a SADA member and Vice President is that the dynamic oral healthcare sector, which is always evolving with new and exciting innovations, demands that professionals constantly grow their knowledge and skills and keep up with the latest developments in the global industry.

In addition to the above, we still have to contend with challenges relating to the costs of starting and maintaining a practice, third party funding and commercialisation, marginalisation of the profession, the implementation of the NHI and many others. Only when we stand together as one voice as the Association, alongside our allied profession colleagues, will we be able to deal with these issues.

I believe that professionals within any industry should participate and get involved in professional associations so that they can engage with like-minded leaders and make a difference, no matter how small.

I look forward to working with all in the profession.

Kind regards,
Dr Pusetso Moipolai

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