



## A GRAND SPECTACLE...

Lucas Malambe, Editor Hasa News

**The Hasa Conference held in Somerset West in June was a grand spectacle – believe the hype. A cursory glance at the appraisal forms sent to delegates shows that the crème de la crème of private healthcare leaders who gathered there were overwhelmingly pleased.**

Private hospital managers, doctors, suppliers and other healthcare stakeholders from across the length and breadth of the country heeded the call to participate in the three-day conference, aptly themed Exploring New Healthcare Frontiers. The get-together featured a fruit salad of the most relevant topics in private healthcare today. An interactive group discussion featuring industry CEOs was the cherry on top.

Approximately 300 delegates attended, and they will not have been disappointed at the quality of the speakers and topics, as proven by the response we got on the assessment forms:

“...found the topics of great interest and very pertinent to what is happening in the current climate in healthcare...” reads one (under general comment), echoing the other respondents.

The speakers included newly appointed head of the ANC's Health and Education Committee, Dr Zweli Mkhize, president of the African Medical Association, Dr Kgosi Letlape, and directors of Deloitte & Touche and PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), being Ashleigh Theophanides and Jan Groenewald respectively. The entire process was facilitated by Hasa acting chairperson Dr Nkaki Matlala and Hasa CEO Adv Kurt Worrall-Clare.

Mkhize set the ball rolling by reminding delegates to think of the healthcare users in their deliberations, and his speech indeed translated into the spirit of the conference, as speaker after speaker punctuated their presentations with ways on how to ease access to quality healthcare in South Africa. Nevertheless, sustainability remained the main driver, as CEOs (and other presenters) prompted delegates to bear in mind the importance and the inherent cost of maintaining quality and excellence in private healthcare.

For me, the new research from PWC and Deloitte was an eye-opener and a call (with facts) to bridge the negativity divide created by all the negative statements aimed at private hospitals in recent months. The PWC study, for instance, busts the lies that are fast becoming a myth. The research findings show that South Africa's private hospitals do not make as much profit or enjoy the same return on investment as other healthcare sectors.

Using statistics from sources outside the private hospital industry, it was refreshing to listen to an analysis by T-Sec economist Mike Schüssler, demonstrating that inflation in the private hospital sector was lower than in the state hospital sector. He said that the fact that the tax payer pays for the consumer in public hospitals masks the 111% price increase per admission since 2000 public hospitals. This compares poorly with the 74% (from private hospitals) and 158% (from medical schemes) over the same period.

Nevertheless, the get-together was also about medical technology, as medical suppliers of all shapes and sizes were on hand. Delegates spent most of their time between presentations marvelling at the exhibitions. Check out some of the pictures on the page left and on page 13.

The next Hasa Conference (date and venue to be confirmed) will be an even grander spectacle – now you believe the hype. Hasa thanks those who returned the appraisal forms. Their input will definitely assist us in ensuring that the conference satisfies your needs for information, research and cutting-edge technology, over and above being a networking tool for healthcare experts and medical devices suppliers.