



Protecting the public and guiding the profession?

To the Editor: Boyce Mkhize's rather verbose attempt¹ to refute Professor Van Niekerk's editorial² seems a classic case of the lady protesting too much. It does, however, unintentionally highlight a key issue that has puzzled me since I sent my first cheque off to the then SAMDC.

The stated aim of the HPCSA is to protect the public and guide the profession. It is rarely seen to act out of concern for the best interests of the profession. Indeed, short of 'legitimising' the health professional, the purpose of the HPCSA has little concern for the welfare of the medical profession.

In light of the statutory aims of the HPCSA, none of the above is surprising. What is surprising is that health professionals are required to pay for the continued existence

of this body. My experience of the HPCSA, which Mkhize's letter in no way dispels, has invariably indicated an attitude of impolite and disrespectful arrogance.

Our colleagues in the public sector have recently taken the first steps in reclaiming their rightful position. It would be quite within our power as a profession to follow suit and call the de-registering bluff of an organisation that has now clearly become our enemy.

As a medical specialist I contribute a hefty R1 153 annual fee to the HPCSA. The very least it can do in return is to change its ethos to 'Guiding the public and protecting the profession'.

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1. Mkhize B. HPCSA: A mess in the Health Department's pocket (Correspondence). *S Afr Med J* 2009; 99: 484, 486, 488.
2. Van Niekerk JP. HPCSA: A mess in the Health Department's pocket. *S Afr Med J* 2009; 99: 203.

Running (and walking) the talk: 2009 Life Healthcare Medical 10

To the Editor: This year's Medical 10 kilometre fun run/walk will take place on Sunday 6 December from the Western Province Cricket Club Sports Complex, Newlands and around Rondebosch Common and Keurboom Park. It is a handicap event with half a minute extra allowed for each year of age over 40 and there will also be a designated category for walkers. The walkers and the oldest runner start at 06:30 with a cutoff of 90 minutes. It was started in 1978 to show that medical professionals practise what they preach to their patients about healthy lifestyle options. Last year there were 236 entrants, 25 of whom had also taken part in the first event in 1978. Life Healthcare were the main sponsors of 2008 and other sponsors included Pathcare, Tuft and Partners, Davies and Associates, Morton and Partners, Fedics, Mediguard, Pharmicare and New Balance. The winners were Francois Hofmeyr (male handicap), Cecil Read (male actual time) and Kim Laxton (female handicap and actual time). Mary Debrick, daughter of Hennie Muller, the Cape Town physician who founded the race, and Lood Rabie, who ran the fastest actual time in that first race, presented the prizes.

The organisation of the race by the running section of Western Province Cricket Club and the start/finish by Matley and Partners was excellent. We were privileged to have the announcements done by Harold Berman, a foremost athletics commentator.



Sponsorships and the entry fees enabled us to donate over R44 000 to Victoria Hospital to replace the broken software for the treadmill used for their cardiac assessments (see photo).

Entry forms for the 31st event are available from Life Healthcare hospitals in the Western Cape (Kingsbury, Claremont, Vincent Palotti, and West Coast) or at www.lifehealthcare.co.za. Enquiries to Mathilda Mallinson, tel. (021) 402-1502 or mathilda.mallinson@lifehealthcare.co.za

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