

PACASA Welcome Note

I would like to personally welcome each of you to this year's annual RHC 2017. It is an exciting time for PACASA as we continue to grow and adapt, remaining always adaptable, motivated and responsive to the challenges and accomplishments of Clinical associates in South Africa. Our organisation is confronting a time of many changes and we are meeting these changes during a time of nation-wide and global change. The world of *Rural Medicine* is an exciting area in which to work, study and play, and we will continue to bring and meet inspired people together in forums like this.

Tasks that PACASA has set for itself for the 2017-2018 period, that will require collaboration with all of our rural health partners include:

1. Addressing the continued challenges of access to healthcare in rural areas
2. Urging NDoH to finalise the policy regarding ClinA's, who remain an integral part of the healthcare system in the rural areas
3. Our continued pledge towards producing quality ClinA's who can produce quality healthcare to all users

As you look around, you will see that there are posters here representing research done by Clinical Associate students: we are getting into the research space, but we require more collaboration, especially as it relates to assessing the positive impact of Clinical Associates in the provision of healthcare. We at PACASA are transforming the way we operate to continuously improve our ability to provide support and education to all our members as well as those within the community. We are determined to fight against the negativity and expel all doubt and confusion about our profession whilst providing support to our fellow members that have continued to meet the challenges of our field and who have excelled despite setbacks. We should all be very proud of where we are today and excited about where we are headed.

In closing, I would like to thank each of you for attending the RHC 2017 and bringing your expertise to our gathering. You, as organisation leaders and fellow professionals, have the vision, the knowledge and the experience to help us pave our way into the future. You are truly our greatest asset today and tomorrow, and we could not accomplish what we do without your support and leadership. Throughout this conference, I ask that you stay engaged, keep proactive and help us shape the future of *Rural Medicine*.

Thank you

Zukisa Tshabalala,

Chairperson, PACASA

