

RuDASA Welcome Note 2017

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to yet another meeting of rural health partners in South Africa, and this year in Taung, NorthWest Province. It's my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to this year's Rural Health Conference, the 21st of our conferences.

We have been afforded yet another opportunity to come together and remind each other of the difference made by the paths each one of us have chosen and continue to choose, to serve the rural and the remote communities in our beloved country. This meeting also affords us an opportunity to offer support to each other, as we continue to serve and comfort our rural communities amidst trials and tribulations thrown at us by the dysfunctional aspects of our healthcare system.

Most importantly though, and most relevant to this year's conference, we are afforded yet another opportunity to share in the lessons learned by our members, partners, friends and colleagues in the frontline and coalface of the work we do in rural health. Indeed, these lessons ought to be shared so we do not reinvent the wheel. We cannot afford to reinvent the wheel when we work in the times of political turbulence, nationally and globally, and financial austerity measures instituted on the healthcare system by decision-makers.

We now have to debate about what constitutes critical posts in the healthcare system, when many of us were taught every post in healthcare is critical, both the cleaner and the doctor, the guard and the nurse, and the administrator and the therapist. However, the current reality is such that these debates have to take place whether we like it or not, and to bury our heads in the sand behaving like ostriches is to perpetuate disservice and injustice on those we claim to serve, many of them not in a position to advocate for themselves.

In this regard, the little each and every one of us can do will certainly go a long way in bringing honour to our patients, clients and communities, and continue to promote their health and wellbeing, so they can all remain active and productive members of society.

I therefore humbly look forward to the lessons to be shared from all corners of this country on innovative solutions for rural health in this conference, through all the presentations, workshops, meetings and conversations that will be taking place.

I should also send a special welcome to all of you members of RuDASA, and invite you to the several discussions scheduled to take place throughout the conference on how we can reposition RuDASA to function as a community of practice in line with our Value Statement adopted in 2016.

Aluta Continua!

Sincerely,

Mosa Moshabela

Chair

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