

International recognition for local healthcare accreditation body

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Top South African healthcare evaluation and standards setting body, the Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA) this week received a third successive thumbs-up as a competent accrediting body from the international watchdog on health standards and accreditation, the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua).

This third consecutive accreditation for a period of four years until 2015 means that COHSASA has achieved formal worldwide recognition that it meets agreed international standards specifically developed and tested for healthcare external evaluation bodies. Previous accreditations for the organisation were from 2002 to 2006 and from 2006 to 2010.

The International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) launched its International Accreditation Programme (IAP) in 1999. This is the only international programme that 'Accredits the Accreditors'. As of last month there are 17 organisations, 31 sets of standards from 23 organisations, and 6 surveyor training programmes currently accredited by ISQua. COHSASA currently has four sets of standards that meet the requirements set out by ISQua. These accredited standards are for hospitals, clinics, hospices and emergency services.

In addition to its sets of standards being recognised, COHSASA itself as an accrediting body has been found to meet the requirements laid down by ISQua.

Says Professor Stuart Whittaker, the CEO of COHSASA, "In a global health environment that is focusing increasingly on quality of health services, this third accreditation of our organisation confirms that COHSASA has been able to maintain world-class standards as an accreditor of healthcare facilities. Furthermore, the accreditation of four sets of our standards means that we are setting standards that ensure facilities meet international requirements for safety and quality.

"Looking back over the years, I can see the benefits of ISQua accreditation. It has been a vehicle that has enabled us to keep up to date with modern trends in evaluating and accrediting healthcare facilities ranging from clinics to large tertiary hospitals. This places South Africa at the leading edge in this field. If COHSASA is used appropriately it can assist other role players in producing the kind of facilities that our citizens demand and which are urgently needed to ensure the success of the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme."

Professor Whittaker said that this latest accreditation award would provide reassurance to ministries of health, funders, clients and COHSASA itself that its performance and standards meet the highest international requirements and are continuously improved.

COHSASA has been working in the field of quality improvement in Southern African healthcare facilities for over 15 years since it was registered as an association not-for-gain in the Republic of South Africa under Section 21 of the Companies Act on 24th November 1996.

Over 530 facilities in both the public and private sector in South Africa and further afield in Africa in Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Rwanda, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia have been through the COHSASA quality improvement and accreditation programme and these facilities have included hospitals, clinics, hospices and sub-acute facilities.

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COHSASA



The Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA), a not-for-profit organisation in Cape Town, South Africa, assists a wide range of healthcare facilities to meet and maintain quality standards.

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