



NMS Executive Board 2023-2025

PROGRESS UPDATE TO THE MEMBERSHIP

This progress update is intended to inform and update the Namibia Medical Society (NMS) membership on the activities of the board since July 8, 2023. The update covers a range of topics, including changes to the NMS office, communication channels, and financial management. It also details the board's engagement with stakeholders like the Ministry of Health and Professions Health Council of Namibia (HPCNA), as well as its participation in international events. A more comprehensive report will be provided at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM).

We encourage you to review this update and contact the Public Relations Officer with any questions or suggestions.

Issued: 19 March 2024

1. NMS OFFICE

Since 2021, NMS had been renting office space from Namibia Mineworkers Properties Limited in Adler Street, Nam-mic House, Windhoek West. However, at the time when the new board started, the society had fallen behind on its rental payments.

The current Board has since renegotiated the rental agreement, paid all outstanding fees, and moved out of the office. As of 8 October 2023, NMS's office is now located on the ***Ground Floor of the Katutura State Hospital Nurses Home on Bach Street in Windhoek.***

NMS OFFICE SECRETARY

In May/June, our long-serving secretary resigned, and her replacement was hired without following proper procedures. Due to limited funds and the absence of proper procedures, the current Board removed her from her position and paid her the agreed salary for two months.

Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, we have been unable to fill the secretary position. The Secretary-General and the Public Relations Officer, with the assistance of Board Members, are handling the duties previously performed by the secretary.

To streamline our operations, NMS has partnered with Glue-Up to implement an all-in-one association management software. In the coming days and weeks, we will be moving our office operations online, but the physical office will remain open.

COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Our account with Telecom was suspended, hence we could not access the nms@iway.na and all other social media platforms linked to it. We now have access to it, as well as [LinkedIn](#), Twitter, Instagram and Facebook

Follow us and keep updated on our activities.

2. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The current Board has taken over the responsibility of being signatories to the bank accounts from the board that served from 2019 to 2021. It has been agreed upon that we will settle all of our outstanding accounts, such as rentals and wages. We are currently finalizing the payments that are owed to the Auditors and bookkeepers who were contracted by the past NMS Boards.

The society remains solely dependent on membership fees for its sustenance. The Board recognizes the need to come up with a long-term and sustainable funding strategy. All members are welcome to propose their ideas to any member of the Board.

3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS

MOHSS

On 25 October 2023, The Executive Board met with the Hon Minister Dr Kalumbi Shangula and the Executive Director Mr Ben Nangombe, to introduce the new board, strengthen stakeholder relations, and indicate areas of interest for NMS.

Research: We have indicated our desire to deepen collaboration with the ministry on public health research. We applauded them on their commitment to improving the quality of care through the implementation of Hospital Quality Standards and expressed our desire to avail NMS members to serve on the Technical Working Groups that deal with research.

Medical Interns Medical Aid & Overtime: As a board, we strongly support the reinstatement of the benefits due to the medical interns and we are in concurrence with the subsequent ruling by the Labour Commissioner in the matter between the interns and the prime minister on November 14 2023.

In the meeting, we proposed that the ED approaches the Public Service Commission with a fully motivated request to:

- a) exclude medical interns from the provisions of section 4 of the **Public Service Staff Rules(PSSR) B.VIII, Part I: Policy Framework On Internship.**
- b) re-instate their fixed overtime and
- c) provide medical aid benefits to medical interns for consideration by the Prime Minister ideally before the beginning of the next financial year 2024/2025.

The aforesaid policy framework was amended in 2018/2019 and implied that Professional interns and trainees are placed temporarily on a fixed-term contract in accordance with the Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995) and **shall not qualify for a salary or other benefits** other than a fixed allowance determined in terms of these rules.

Training: The implementation of the Human Resources for Health Strategic Plan is praiseworthy. However, the lack of prioritisation of allied health professionals and failure to make necessary preparations for infrastructural development or adjustments to accommodate the new specialists is unacceptable. This oversight leads to many specialists returning to underdeveloped or unimproved settings where their knowledge and skills cannot be utilized to improve overall healthcare services. Therefore, these issues must be addressed to ensure the effective utilization of all healthcare professionals and the provision of high-quality healthcare services.

We recommended that the Ministry establish quotas for training per year and category of specialization. Additionally, they should set up a technical working group to provide independent advice on improvements that need to be made before receiving specialized doctors.

HPCNA

On October 26th, 2023, the executive board held a meeting with the management of HPCNA to discuss various topics such as research, training, and ethical practices. During the meeting, we advised HPCNA to collaborate with the Ministry of Health to ensure that all doctors involved in the training of medical interns have received formal guidance on delivery mode and training other adults.

We proposed that HPCNA should create a new registration category for graduates who are unable to pass the council exams or internships. Additionally, we have agreed to utilize their resolved medico-legal case reports to draw lessons that would be beneficial for practitioners as a guide to ethical practice.

PSN

In August 2023, the PSN President invited the Secretary-General to participate as a judge panelist for the PSN Excellence Awards 2023. The awards aimed to recognize exceptional pharmacies and individuals in both the private and public sectors, whose innovative entrepreneurship contributes to improving pharmaceutical services delivery and outcomes in Namibia. These awards were presented during the Conference & Annual General Meeting held on September 9th and 10th, 2023.

THE GLOBAL HEALTH NETWORK

The Global Health Network have indicated its desire to facilitate access to funding for health research, scholarships for research studies and provide a hub for publishing Namibian health research findings for a wider global audience. Discussions are still underway.

KENYA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The KMA has extended a guest invitation to our board chairperson to attend their 51st Annual Scientific Conference in Kisumu City during April 2024. On the sidelines of this workshop will be the discussion on the formation of the Coalition of African National Medical Associations (CANMA)

WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The Board Chairperson attended the World Medical Association regional meeting on 18-19 February 2024, in Sandton South Africa, and made contributions to the review of the Declaration of Helsinki. This event also served as a networking platform to strengthen ties among delegates and to create a platform for the exploration of synergies and shared concerns. NMS is in the process of registration as a constituent member of the World Medical Association.

EVENTS

NMS Health Seminar 2023

On 11 November 2023, NMS successfully hosted a seminar with the theme "Health - An indispensable catalyst for economic growth & productivity" at Arrebusch Travel Lodge. The seminar brought together distinguished speakers and dedicated participants, resulting in valuable insights and an enriching and impactful event.

Key highlights of the seminar include engaging discussions on vital topics such as health economics, healthcare funding, universal health coverage, and global health diplomacy. The seminar also featured insightful presentations by distinguished speakers, who shed light on the intricate links between health and economic growth. Additionally, constructive panel discussions stimulated thoughtful conversations and exchange of knowledge.

The event was generously sponsored by the Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP), Cospharm Limited, and Namibia Medical Engineering. Over 70 people attended the event in person.

Annual Conference & AGM 2024

The Executive Board has decided to host the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Scientific Conference in July or August of 2024. A preparatory committee has been formed to finalize the event's details and theme, which will be communicated to the Membership once they are confirmed.

The AGM in 2024 is expected to be significant because it will involve voting on sweeping changes that are necessary for NMS to be repositioned into an organization that aligns with the expectations of the members.

THE FUTURE

GENERAL WORK PLAN:

The board has recognized the need for a document that can guide the society's day-to-day activities. There will be a Strategic Planning workshop on 22-23 March 2024 for the board to draft a general strategic work plan that will be presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for input.

To achieve their objectives, the board has decided to create the following subcommittees:

1. **Medical Education, Training & Research:** This committee will lead the process of developing a medical journal. They will also identify opportunities and strategies that NMS can employ in this field. *This committee is chaired by Dr Rahja Kauluma*

2. **Medical Aids and Care in the Private Sector:** The objective of this committee is to identify loopholes and challenges in the private sector and advise the NMS Board on the necessary actions to take. *This committee is chaired by Dr Berit Platt*
3. **Membership & Stakeholder Engagements:** This committee will identify ways to enrich the membership experience and how best to benefit from stakeholder relations. *This committee is chaired by Dr Ndaudanekelwa Hapulile*

The chairperson of each committee will provide an update on their progress at the AGM. If you're interested in serving on any of these committees or have any advice to offer, please reach out to the Public Relations Officer or any of the Executive board members. Other committees will be formed on an ad-hoc basis or where a need will be identified.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The board has acknowledged that society is heavily reliant on the executive board, whose responsibility is to provide strategic policy directions to the administrator. This reliance on the board, coupled with the short and limited terms for board membership, makes it easy to lose institutional memory and direction. This is especially true because every new board sets its own strategy for the two years that they are in office.

To address this, there is a need for reform by amending the constitution. The amendment should address the institutional setup, including the board and day-to-day administration, the length of terms, the term limits, and the election of members. It should also cover the affiliation with other societies within and outside Namibia, the types of membership, and membership fees, among other issues.

The proposed amendments will be shared with the membership in advance for consideration and ratification at the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

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