

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members,

It is time again for our annual congress! We have an exciting line-up of academic and social events. This is also a good time for networking and connecting with colleagues and friends.

This year has had its fair share of challenges. The Discovery Health Endoscopy Network kicked off with fanfare and headache for many members. Some of our members are living under a cloud not knowing when their patients will be subjected to in-room co-pays for endoscopy. The projected date of this is 01 July 25.

Increasingly we are being subjected to actuarial science type analysis of our endoscopy practice. We are being penalised for the number of scopes performed rather than the indications and outcomes. Unfortunately, it seems this trend will persist and only get worse. From a cost-cutting perspective, the next big ticket item will be sedation for in-room scopes. There are already murmurings of "fixed-fee" for endoscopy. Question remains who will determine the fee. So, brace yourselves for more regulation.

Our colleagues in the public sector are currently facing a wave of threatening rhetoric on the withdrawal of commuted overtime and the payment that goes with it. The biggest noise comes from Gauteng and Limpopo provinces, but if successful will



entice other provinces to do the same. We should resist this with a greater resistance than we do the NHI.

The NHI looks certain to remain in one form or another. Although short on detail the health minister is hell-bent on implementing this. The legislation is short on detail and it is unclear how this will affect us and our patients, but it will definitely impact the way we practice. The UHAC is currently fighting this legislation and we await clarification about this from the courts. More trouble is on the horizon with the newly proposed "draft exemption on tariffs". You will soon hear a whole lot more on this.

We are training way too few medical gastroenterologists. This is a result of freezing of training posts for local fellows. I am advocating for more local fellows to be trained by whatever means possible.

Just a reminder that this is a SAGES Council election year - we encourage your participation in this important event, please attend the AGM at the congress. My term as SAGES president is coming to an end and VG Naidoo will take over the presidency at the congress. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone and especially SAGES council, for your unwavering support and contribution to the cause. Your selfless sacrifice to serve does not go unnoticed. I wish VG and the new council the very best for the future.

Amid all this gloom I am wishing you a fruitful and enjoyable congress.

**Ernst Fredericks**  
*SAGES President*