

# Schwella appointed as chairman of the COHSASA board

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**Erwin Schwella**, professor of Public Leadership at Stellenbosch University, has been appointed chairman of the board of the Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA).

COHSASA is a Cape Town based NPO with a mission to improve the safety and quality of healthcare delivered in emerging countries. As a means to this end, the Council has issued 444 accreditation awards and worked with over 600 healthcare facilities since 1995 in 11 countries throughout the African continent.

The new Chairman of the COHSASA Board, Professor Schwella takes over from Professor Gert van Zyl, dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State who has served as chairman of the board since his appointment on 1 October 2010.

In addition to his position in the School of Public Leadership, Professor Schwella also holds a professorial appointment with Leiden University in the Netherlands and has been a visiting academic and scholar at world renowned universities, including the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Leiden University, Leuven University and Manchester University amongst many others.



Erwin Schwella

Erwin Schwella's academic credentials include five degrees (two of them cum laude) at Stellenbosch University in Law, Sociology, Public Administration and Public Leadership and a PhD with a dissertation on the Role of the Media in Public Accountability in South Africa.

He is a widely published academic author with more than 60 publications (and many more unpublished action research and consultancy reports). He has held high-level consultancy government briefs from all spheres of South African government since democracy as well as for the European Union, the British Government and the Namibian Government.

Professor Schwella is continuously involved in senior leadership education and training at all levels of South African governance and administration. His current research interests include leadership in governance, institutional capacity building through organisation development, transformation and change management in complex and dynamic societies, strategic thinking, and new forms of accountability in service delivery models.

In his acceptance speech, Professor Schwella said that he was delighted to accept the new position and that he would continue to rely on Professor Van Zyl for his advice.

Referring to the outstanding contribution made by Professor Van Zyl during his term of office as chairman, Professor Schwella said, "I have been tremendously impressed by your dedication and your continuous focus on a number of complex issues while at the helm of the COHSASA board and how you have often met all requirements timeously and in an extremely wise manner."

Professor Stuart Whittaker, CEO of COHSASA echoed this viewpoint about Prof. Van Zyl saying, "From my perspective, it has been a great pleasure to work with you and I have always felt that I could call on you for advice and objective support."

In response, Prof van Zyl said:

"I have found the three year term very exciting and challenging. It was a period to regroup, consider new strategies and explore new areas of expansion and cooperation and to drive the SafeCare initiative that was also started during my term as chair.

"It was also trying time with the National Department of Health restructuring quality assurance in the country and for their services including clinics and hospitals. The highlight of my term as chairperson is the personnel of COHSASA - to them I owe my deepest gratitude and appreciation for all their hard work and dedication. Always ready to go an extra mile - to all of you - Thanks! You made my term as chairperson of the board and you are a stunning team! The board members of COHSASA are also thanked for their support and hard work."

## **Farewell to a COHSASA Board member**

The November 2013 board meeting ended by honouring Dr Hélène Visser, manager of Specialised Health for the City of Cape Town and a founding member of the COHSASA board. She attended her first board meeting on 6 October 1995. She is regarded as an expert in public health and had given her time and expertise to COHSASA for 18 years until her resignation from the board on 26 April 2013. She also served on the technical committee and has been instrumental in the development of Environmental Health Standards for Local Government as well as the continued review of the Primary Healthcare Standards.

At her farewell, she said she was sad to be leaving COHSASA but has wonderful memories of working with outstanding colleagues

"My time with COHSASA was very special. Being a founder member, I have seen the company grow and develop. It really felt like a second home to me. You can be assured of my continued support and I wish COHSASA everything of the best for the future."



**Board changes...***(from left) Outgoing Chair Professor Gert van Zyl, incoming Chair, Professor Erwin Schwella, CEO of COHSASA, Professor Stuart Whittaker and founder Board member, Dr Hélène Visser who resigned in April 2013.*

## **Top cardio-thoracic surgeon appointed to the COHSASA board**



*Professor Tony Linegar, the Associate Professor Cardiothoracic Surgery, University Free State and University of Cape Town and Head of Thoracic Surgery at Groote Schuur Hospital, was appointed to the COHSASA Board at the November 2013 meeting.*

Professor Anthony Linegar who currently sits on COHSASA's Technical Committee, has been appointed to the Board of COHSASA as from November 8, 2013. Professor Linegar graduated with an MBChB from Stellenbosch University in 1984. Two years later he did a diploma in Diving and Submarine Medicine. His other professional qualifications include FCS (Cardiothoracic Surgery) SA, UCT 1992; Fellowship in thoracic surgery Royal Brompton Hospital 1993 and a PHD from the University of the Free State in 2008 entitled: A Model for the Development of Thoracic Surgery in Central SA. Professor Linegar has written 35 publications and book chapters on various aspects of thoracic surgery.

His current involvements include the following: Associate Professor Cardiothoracic Surgery, University Free State and University of Cape Town; Head of thoracic surgery at Groote Schuur Hospital; Private Thoracic Surgical and Intensive Care Practice in Cape Town; Senator of the Colleges of Medicine SA; Secretary of College of Medicine (Cardiothoracic Surgery); Treasurer Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons SA; Regent Southern African region of the IASLC (International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer); Leader Thoracic Surgical Working Group Committee of PASCATS (Pan African Society Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery); Co-Director Critical Care Unit N1 City Hospital, Cape Town; Co-Director and Trustee of the SA Mesothelioma Interest Group; Examiner in Cardiothoracic Surgery and Critical Care and Research Consultant (accreditation and patient safety) at COHSASA.

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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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