

Historical day for health care in Botswana

By [Marilyn Keegan](#), issued by [COHSASA](#)

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History in Botswana healthcare was made in Gaborone last week when South African quality improvement and accreditation organisation, COHSASA (the Council for Health Service Accreditation of Southern Africa) and Boitekanelo College signed a memorandum of agreement to join forces.



Professor Stuart Whittaker, CEO of COHSASA, signs a Memorandum of Agreement with Boitekanelo College in Botswana as (from left), Dr Khumo Seipone, Director of Health Services in the Ministry of Health and Dr Tiro Mampame, Managing Director of Boitekanelo College look on.

COHSASA, a 19-year-old internationally accredited not-for-profit organisation based in Cape Town, and the College are linking services to provide a seamless and integrated quality improvement and accreditation programme for Botswana.

The aim of the collaboration is to transform healthcare services in Botswana and other SADC countries through building organisational, management and staff competencies and quality improvement and safety training that will assist healthcare facilities to achieve and maintain internationally recognised accreditation.

The union will also address the critical shortage of skilled workers and aim to provide sufficient, well-trained personnel, introduce standardised operating

procedures and ensure strong information management.

Health care workers in COHSASA's client facilities are trained and empowered to understand the content and the intention of the standards, to evaluate their compliance and implement continuous quality improvement in order to achieve compliance. To do this work COHSASA requires a work force with medical, nursing and allied health professional skills who have been trained in quality improvement and assurance methodologies, evaluation and monitoring techniques and who have strong training and facilitation skills.

This is where Boitekanelo College's (BC) contribution will be made. BC is Botswana's first privately owned healthcare training institute, established in 2007 and is strategically meeting needs identified by the Botswana Ministry of Health. Over time, the College has become a pioneer in private healthcare training and a centre of excellence in training and consultancy.

It will now turn its attention to training in quality improvement and quality assurance. Courses in standards interpretation, theory of quality improvement, implementing quality improvement projects, monitoring and analysing quality improvement data and measuring outcomes in improvements are some of the skills that will be transferred to Botswana.

Quality improvement and accreditation programmes in Botswana will this way become cost-effective and sustained in facilities over time. The College, with two existing campuses and a Centre for Clinical Excellence under construction, awards certificates, diplomas - and more recently degrees - to boost the number of healthcare workers and professionals in Botswana. In this way the College intends to assist the Botswana Ministry of Health in its quest to ensure that all its facilities are accredited and remain so. All courses at the College have been certified by the Botswana Qualifications Authority.

Working hand in hand

COHSASA will work with BC to ensure that all training staff fully understand the elements of quality improvement methods and quality standards. COHSASA will also provide the IT requirements needed by BC, the Ministry and healthcare facilities to monitor the level of conformance to quality and safety standards.

COHSASA will carry out baseline surveys in participating facilities to identify areas of non-conformance and use its IT system, CoQIS, to direct needed quality improvement interventions. It will also carry out accreditation surveys to identify facilities that meet international quality and safety standards and accreditation requirements.

Speaking at the function, the Director of Health Services in the Ministry of Health for Botswana, Dr Khumo Seipone, said the signing of the agreement on February 19, 2014, marked an historic day in Botswana health services "which will forever be remembered".

Dr Tironyaome Mampame, Managing Director of Boitekanelo College, which is set on becoming a powerful SADC resource of excellent standards in healthcare training, said the purpose of the MOU was to promote quality and safety of patient care through relevant training and support. By combining forces with COHSASA, he said, skills transfer and sustainability of standards in Botswana healthcare institutions could be achieved simultaneously.

In his speech, Professor Stuart Whittaker of COHSASA said: "The proposed collaboration affords both parties the opportunity to build a world class system of quality improvement and accreditation in healthcare that will be of benefit to Southern Africa and, in time, the rest of Africa."

ABOUT MARILYN KEEGAN

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