

# **SOUTH AFRICAN PET USERS ASSOCIATION**

## **CHAIRMAN's REPORT GENERAL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 2006**

Dear SAPUA members

Many developments have taken place in the field of PET imaging in South Africa since the founding of SAPUA at a meeting at Tygerberg Hospital in December 2004. PET has become a reality in a number of centres around the country in both the private and academic sectors. SAPUA has also evolved from that initial brain storming session into a functioning association with a great diversity of stakeholders.

Today SAPUA provides an open forum where issues affecting clinicians, radiographers, scientists, members of industry, and other stakeholders such as private funders and regulators can communicate on common matters related to PET. The outgoing secretary of SAPUA, Dr Sietske Rubow has kept an up to date mailing list, and along with committee member Mrs T Eiselin has set up a SAPUA web page. All members are therefore able to easily communicate directly with the entire organization, or via individual office bearers. On the other hand individual office bearers have also been involved in a number of important discussions over the past 18 months. Because SAPUA has no funding of its own, I want to pay particular thanks to the SASNM, RSSA, Donald Gordon Medical Centre, and the Nuclear Medicine Department of Tygerberg Hospital for their financial assistance in making many of these meetings possible.

The original founding document of SAPUA set out many goals for the new organization. Reflecting on the founding document I believe that while many of these goals have been achieved, a number of challenges remain. The Coding Task Group, lead by Prof Jan Esser drew up a coding structure that was an essential requirement for the drawing up of a tariff structure, a task performed on behalf of the Association of Nuclear Physicians by the Radiological Society of South Africa. Similarly an initial set of clinical indications was drawn up by the Protocol Task Group, lead by Dr Gerrit Engelbrecht. The work of both of these groups also involved close and effective collaboration with the RSSA group headed by Dr Bates Alheit, involved with determining tariffs and negotiating with funders. The National Strategy Task Group, lead by Prof Mike Sathekge completed a draft document predicting the initial demand for PET studies in South Africa. All of these documents were recently resent to all SAPUA members, and I hope that this meeting will allow us to formalize their status.

The last 18 months has taught me a great deal. I am convinced that since the founding meeting in 2004, that many stakeholders have been brought closer together by working with and within this organization, rather than being driven apart. If my impressions are correct, this can only be to the benefit of our patients.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing secretary of SAPUA, Dr Sietske Rubow for her many as always reliable and thorough contributions. Thanks are also due to the members of all the involved task groups, and committee members for their valuable input and advice. Finally I want to thank all of the members for their inputs, contributions, and opinions, that so enrich the activities in this organization.

Regards to you all

James Warwick (SAPUA Chair)