

# Mid-level Workers in Pharmacy Progress made so far – SA Experience

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# History of Mid-level worker in Pharmacy

- Pharmacy mid-level workers, Pharmacy Support Personnel, introduced in 2000
- Workplace-based training
- Pharmacists in the workplace - tutors for the learners
- Sector specific training - Community, institutional, wholesale & manufacturing pharmacy

# Categories of Mid Level Workers

## Current registers

1. Learner basic pharmacist's assistant
2. Basic pharmacist's assistant (NQF 3 / Grade 11)
3. Learner post basic pharmacist's assistant
4. Post basic pharmacist's assistant (NQF 4 / Grade 12)

# Challenges with current MLWs

- Qualification did not provide knowledge and skills to meet the demands of the published scopes of practice
- Insufficient competence for scope of practice
- Inability to train sufficient numbers due to a training model that relies on tutors, pharmacy premises approvals & full-time employment of learners
- Variable training standards due to tutors having high workload and inadequate training experience

## Challenges continued..

- Concern over patient safety due to dispensing errors
- No career pathing and progression
- No entry exclusion criteria which resulted in many staying as “learners for life” (6000 learners)
- Limited or no contact time between provider and learner
- Sector specific training means further training is required to move between different pharmacy sectors
- From 2009 a grade 12 qualification entry requirement for learners to attain a Post Basic PA qualification equivalent to grade 12

# Registered Mid-level Workers

Category of Mid-level Worker	Totals
Assistant Learner Basic	3363
Assistant Basic	4130
Assistant Learner Post-Basic	2384
Assistant Post-Basic	9158
<b>MLWs</b>	<b>19035</b>

SAPC registers as of 18 October 2016

# National Health Insurance (NHI) introduction . . .

- Intent of NHI is to ensure access to appropriate, efficient, and quality health services for all
- Delivery of pharmaceutical services within the new system focussed at a primary health care level
- Requires re-engineering of primary healthcare system
- Dependent on an adequate supply of effective pharmacy mid-level workers

(National health insurance in South Africa: Policy paper. Department of Health, 2011)

# Potential Barriers

Potential barriers to an adequate supply of MLWs

- Current training qualification expires 2018 with teach-out period ending in 2021
- Publication of relevant legislation
- Phasing in of new cadre (PTs) and integration with pharmacist's assistants already in the workplace
- Accreditation of sufficient providers



# Current Pharmacy Technician

CHE Qualification: NMMU only accredited provider

- Higher Certificate: Pharmacy Support (1 year 120 credits)
- Advanced Certificate: Pharmacy Technical Support (1 year 120 credits)
- Leads to a qualification: Diploma - Pharmacy Technician

Qualified PTs have Scope of Practice Post Basic Assistant pending publication of Regulations recognising the new category of MLW

# Council decisions regarding MLWs

## *Council decisions following consultation with stakeholders and TACNHC recommendations*

### **Council resolved :-**

- Retain the current pharmacist's assistants and scopes of practice;
  - ➔ Basic; and
  - ➔ Post-Basic
- Review the current qualifications to correct the incongruences between the scopes of practice and the competencies;
- Retain Pharmacy Technician; and
- MLWs (Basic, Post-Basic and Pharmacy Technician) to be produced using two routes i.e. Council for Higher Education and Quality Council for Trade and Occupations sub-frameworks

# Education and Training of New MLWs

Current MLWs	NQF	New MLWs	NQF
Pharmacist's Assistants Basic	NQF 3	Pharmacist's Assistant Basic	NQF 4
Pharmacist's Assistants Post-Basic	NQF 4	Pharmacist's Assistant Post-Basic	NQF 5
		Pharmacy Technician	NQF 6

## Academic Qualification – CHE route

- Full time study
- Distance learning

## Occupational Qualification – QCTO route

- Workplace integrated learning

# Proposed Occupational Qualification

- Three year qualification (Occupational Certificate: Pharmacy Technician)
- Three exit parts i.e. basic or post basic or pharmacy technician

## Basic PA

- 6 Months
- 62 Credits



## Post Basic PA

- 12 months
- 130 credits



## Pharmacy Technician

- 18 months
- 167 credits



# Proposed Occupational Qualification

- Workplace integrated learning qualification
- Learners may be employed in pharmacy, employed elsewhere or unemployed
- Unemployed learners may practise scope of their highest attained part qualification
- Learners employed in training pharmacy under a tutor may practise scope of their learner qualification
- No traineeship
- National Exam set by SAPC as the Quality Assurance Partner

# Proposed Academic Qualification

- Higher Certificate followed by Advanced certificate (Pharmacy technician)  
OR
- Two year diploma ( Pharmacy Technician)

- Higher Certificate
- 1 year
- 130 credits



- Advanced Certificate
- 1 year
- 140 credits
- Pharmacy Technician



or

- Diploma
- 2 years
- 240 credits



# Academic Qualification

Proposed CHE Qualification:

- Diploma: Pharmacy Technician
- 2 years full time study
- 6 month traineeship
- National Exam – SAPC Quality Assurance Partner

# Benefits for the learner

- Internationally recognised qualification
- Improved knowledge base
- Competencies align to scope of practice
- Skill set commensurate with required support functions in a pharmacy.
- Improved access (full time employment no longer a requirement for registration of a learner, multiple entry & exit points)
- Career pathing and progression is built into the qualification.



# Benefits to Society and the Country

- Increased employment opportunities for many
- Increased productive capacity of MLW
- Improved utilisation of pharmacy human resources (pharmacists free to focus more on patient care)
- Bring MLW in line with the rest of Africa
- Strengthen our healthcare system.

# The Pharmacy Technician

- The new pharmacist's assistant is a generalist who can operate in the four categories of pharmacy;
  - ✓ community
  - ✓ institutional (private or public),
  - ✓ manufacturing
  - ✓ wholesale
- Pharmacy Technician works under;
  - ✓ direct personal supervision of a pharmacist in a pharmacy
  - ✓ indirect personal supervision of a pharmacist in PHC

# Strategic Focus

The new Mid Level Workers will be suitable;

- For National Health Insurance and the re-engineering of primary healthcare services including the ideal clinic initiative
- To address the current risks to patient safety as a result of dispensing errors &/or incorrect medicine counselling
- To free up pharmacists to focus on patient care
- For filling posts with skilled, committed & competent individuals; in line with the National Development Plan goal 2030

## Where are we?

- Diploma to be discussed by the Education Committee on 08 November 2016 and EXCO on 30 November 2016, then will be published in the government gazette for comment.
- Occupational certificate to be published by SAPC and the QCTO for comment.
- Accreditation process will be finalised in 2017 for providers of the occupational certificate.
- Processes for final assessments of learners of the Occupational certificate in progress

# The Pharmacy Technician



**Thank you**

From Jackie & Claudette

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