



Free State Pharmacy Month

“Free State Pharmacy Month” kicked off with a bang! It commenced with an Aspen sponsored CPD evening hosted by the Free State branch of the PSSA at the Protea Hotel, Willow Lake, Bloemfontein.

Dr Herman Jordaan (psychiatrist) was the guest of honour and main speaker. He conducted an open discussion regarding various aspects of mental health and the delegates could ask him questions, which led to the sharing of ideas among the participants and Dr Jordaan.

The Pharmaceutical Society of the Free State, in conjunction with Patrick Kgaphola from Pharmaceutical Services Free State, launched an outreach program on-site at The Free State Psychiatric Hospital Complex. This event perfectly highlighted this year’s theme of mental health awareness.



Red jelly with marshmallow hearts given to the nurses as a reminder to support and care for patients with mental health problems



Back row (left to right) Martlie Mocke-Richter (Chairperson Free State PSSA), Patrick Kgaphola (Free State Pharmaceutical Services), Annari Smith (Vice-Chairperson Free State PSSA), front row: Pharmacists Lize Nel (left) and Jade Swerts (right)

At the hospital we gave patients the opportunity to ask questions and to interact with us, as well as enjoy a cupcake and have some fun. We handed out balloons to the children and played games with them, which included the sticking of ‘emoji stickers’.

Our last stop of the day was ‘House Kosmos’, which is a children’s ward. There we found more children and treated them to a



Members of the team interacting with young patients

delicious cupcake or two, we gave out balloons to the excited children and also tied balloons to the beds of those children who were unfortunately bed ridden.

The PSSA Free State branch launched a competition. The winner was Heidedal CHC Pharmacy, who went the extra mile in portraying the theme “Mental illness can be treated, ask your pharmacist for advice”.



Heidedal CHC Pharmacy – First place winners of Free State Pharmacy Month competition 2019

They promoted various aspects of mental health awareness and the key role pharmacists can play in a 4-week long initiative. Activities included mental health talks, competitions, information leaflets, health promotion hampers, games involving patients and staff as well as discussions within the multi-disciplinary team. Positive thinking, exercise and stress management were some of the topics discussed with patients at the facility.

A highlight for many of the CHC staff was the scavenger hunt. It was designed to create awareness of the impact exercise has



Fruit parcels with a leaflet giving 10 steps on how to manage stress

on mental wellbeing. The nursing staff had to solve riddles and collect clues hidden all over the facility. The first team to solve the clue and answer two questions from the Standard Treatment Guidelines won a prize. This initiative was enjoyed by all and we felt that the community benefitted.

It was truly a humbling and life changing experience, which brought a little happiness to the patients (especially the children) and a great deal of joy to those of us who participated.