



Prof. Hannelie Meyer takes the leadership reins of SAVIC

The South African Vaccination and Immunisation Centre (SAVIC) at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) is a public-private-academic alliance between SAVIC, the National Department of Health (NDoH), the vaccine industry, academic institutions and other stakeholders, with the overall aim of supporting immunisation services. SAVIC was established at the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA) in 2003 under the leadership of Prof. Anwar Hoosen (Department of Microbiological Pathology) and Prof. Jeffrey Mphahlele (Department of Virology). Prof. Rose Burnett took over from Prof. Mphahlele in 2014, and since she is retiring at the end of 2021, in order to ensure a smooth transition, Prof. Hannelie Meyer (Division of Public Health Pharmacy and Management) has taken over the leadership of SAVIC from 1 March 2021.

Since joining SAVIC in 2013, Prof. Meyer has dedicated almost all of her spare time to immunisation services-related activities. These activities include serving on two Ministerial Advisory Committees (MAC) – she is currently the Chair of the National Immunisation Safety Expert Committee (NISEC), an MAC concerned with vaccine pharmacovigilance (adverse events following immunisation), and in that capacity serves on the National Advisory Group on Immunisation (NAGI). She also serves on three NAGI working groups: Vaccination of healthcare workers, Mandatory vaccination, and Vaccine hesitancy.

In addition, she serves on Work Stream 1: Evidence Review of Efficacy and Safety of Vaccines, reporting to the MAC on COVID-19 vaccines. Furthermore, she serves on the National Technical Working Group for COVID-19 Vaccine Introduction and is the co-lead for COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Surveillance. She is also part of a team of experts from the nine Schools of Pharmacy in the country, working with the South African Pharmacy Council to develop a generic

short course on vaccination techniques for pharmacists to build capacity for future vaccination, including the administration of vaccines as part of the national roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Since Prof. Meyer joined SAVIC in 2013 as our Scientific Advisor for pharmacovigilance, cold chain management and logistics, SAVIC has gone from strength to strength. She was highly instrumental in developing the Higher Certificate in Vaccinology, which has been offered by the School of Pharmacy under her leadership since 2019, and SAVIC's annual series of Vaccinology Short Courses, which have been offered since 2016. She is a key member of the SAVIC team who developed training materials and trained master trainers for the NDOH COVID-19 vaccination programme.

She has also greatly strengthened SAVIC's vaccination advocacy efforts through organising community outreach campaigns, and mass media communication through television, radio, newspapers, popular magazines and social media platforms. Her passion for and dedication to supporting immunisation services is evidenced by her decision to resign as Acting Head of her division from 1 March 2021, in order to devote enough time to supporting the NDOH's Expanded Programme on Immunisation and COVID-19 vaccination programme.

SAVIC would like to congratulate Prof. Meyer and wish her all the best as she takes over from Prof. Burnett.

Prof Hannelie Meyer

What inspires me most and keeps me going is i) to see how students grow and they become inspired and passionate to make an impact on the lives of the people of South Africa; ii) to do operational research with the aim to improve practice for the ultimate benefit of the patient iii) to work in collaboration with other academics and inspire one another.

I focus on the various aspects of public health pharmacy and management. My research focus is on vaccination as an important pillar of antimicrobial stewardship, and medicine utilisation within the field of public health pharmacy, especially adherence.

