We further decided to incorporate some goals of the HPCSA in our strategic plan so as to be in line with Council’s five year strategy.

The Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners is proud to welcome the second edition of the profession’s newsletter to all registered Environmental Health Professionals in the country. This newsletter is also released for Environmental Health Assistants, our mid-level workers.

We are at last recognising the contributions of these professionals in the delivery of environmental health services in the country. The profession, like many other professions within the HPCSA, is acceding to the national call of the Department of Health that the category of mid-level health workers be strengthened in fast tracking the delivery of health services to the needy communities of our country, thus making health services accessible to all in the land.

Our EHPs should also not regard this category of EH professionals as a threat but they should rather lend their support, as they are there to assist. Environmental Health Assistants have been rendering environmental health services for many years in the country. Their existence is now being formalised.

The present Board, since its inauguration in July 2010, held five full Board meetings. The Board was also able to evaluate its performance against the set 2010-2015 strategic plan. I need to report that we are doing well in terms of our set objectives and targets. We further decided to incorporate some goals of the HPCSA in our strategic plan so as to be in line with Council’s five year strategy.

One of our two Board meetings in a year is held within provinces where environmental health professionals are addressed on matters pertaining to the functioning of the Board. Our meeting with stakeholders was held in Durban last year, which turned out to be the first meeting attended by over 300 professionals to be addressed by the Board. The meeting with stakeholders this year was held in October, in Umtata, Eastern Cape. The Board would like to thank the professionals in this province for attending in large numbers. We have committed ourselves to a visible Board and we value these meetings dearly.

We experienced one resignation by the Chairperson of the Education Committee, Professor L. De Jager last year who was a representative of HESA on the Board. In her place, HESA elected Mr. Charles Qoto, the Head of Environmental Health at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Mr. Qoto was subsequently elected chairperson of the Education Committee in the Board meeting of July 2012.
COMMUNITY SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS
By Aneliswa Cele

The Department of Health has amended the Regulation for Community Service which will now allow Municipalities to employ Environmental Health practitioners to complete their one year Community Service. Students who are still awaiting placement are encouraged to contact the Department of Health to update their contact details.

The placement of Environmental Health Practitioners for compulsory community service has been a serious challenge for the Department of Health since 2007; this has had a negative impact on the environmental health services in general.

In South Africa, for an Environmental Health Practitioner to be allowed to practice his or her profession, he or she must have completed compulsory community service for a year as part of registration requirements with Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

For further enquiries or information, please contact the National Department of Health, Workforce Management: Statutory Service Placements and ask to speak to Jabulani or Sina at (012) 395 8678/8679 respectively.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANT’S REGISTRATIONS AND CPD REQUIREMENTS
By Jerry Chaka

The Board took a decision to open a register for Environmental Health Assistants and register them under a supplementary register for Environmental Health Assistants.

The resolution by the Board is informed by the national health policy on the introduction of midlevel workers to fast track the delivery of health services in the country. Other Boards within the Health Professions Council also responded positively to this call made by the late Minister of Health, Dr M. Tshabalala - Msimang during her term of office.

For the Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners, (PBEHP) we opted to consider Environmental Health Assistants who have been a resource for Environmental Health Practitioners in the delivery of Environmental Health Services in the country for a period spanning over thirty years.

The PBEHP is also looking at the training needs and a clear curriculum for training of Environmental Health Assistants will be developed in due course. In the meantime whilst we do not have formal training qualifications for Environmental Health Assistants the best that we could opt for was to open a supplementary register for all those EHA’s practising in the field of Environmental Health. One of the requirements for them to be considered for Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) benefits is that they should be registered with a Professional Body.
**Guidelines for registration of environmental health assistants**

These guidelines are intended to assist an applicant who wishes to register as an Environmental Health Assistant with the Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners.

The Board recently confirmed the following policy for the registration of Environmental Health Assistants without a formal qualification as follows:

- A practising Environmental Health Assistant with less than 2 years’ experience would have to undergo a 3 month mentoring period under the guidance and supervision of a qualified and registered Environmental Health Practitioner, to be followed by an assessment, upon successful completion of which such applicant would qualify for registration with Council;
- A practising Environmental Health Assistant with more than 2 years’ experience as environmental health assistant would have to undergo an assessment upon successful completion of which they would qualify for registration with Council and;
- A practising Environmental Health Assistant who qualified for registration through the process could be registered in a supplementary register if such applicant had not completed a formal qualification.

**Professional Studies**

- Where applicable an applicant must hold a qualification equivalent to the recognised South African qualification.
- The minimum period of training must correspond with the training required from candidates qualifying in South Africa.

**Practical Training/Professional Experience**

- An applicant for registration must also submit official documentary evidence of having completed full-time practical training and/or professional experience.

**Applications**

The following documents must be submitted to the Professional Board at the address provided below:

- An application form, duly completed;
- Copies of all degree/diploma certificates or similar academic qualifications certified only by an attorney in this capacity as notary public and bearing the official stamp.
- A copy of a valid Passport or Identity Document as proof of current citizenship, duly certified by a notary public as indicated above.

**EHA’s must continuously update their professional knowledge and skills at all times.**

No applications will be considered without all requested documentation being submitted.

The Board decided to keep this special register open until new EHA’s who have undergone formal tertiary training are available. In this regard, the present register will be closed and a new register for this new category of EHA’s will be opened by HPCSA.

The Board also took a resolution that EHA’s must continuously update their professional knowledge and skills at all times. This category of environmental health professionals are therefore required to acquire fifteen (15) continued educational units per annum through the Continued Professional Development Programme, effective from the year 2012. There is a huge number of EHA’s registered with HPCSA under a supplementary register within the Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners.

The Board appeals to all Environmental Health Professionals to communicate to all EHA’s that the supplementary register is now open and active and that they should register following the guidelines mentioned in this article. It is also compulsory that all registered EHA’s acquire fifteen (15) CEU’s per annum starting from 01 January 2012. Employers are requested to give support to registered EHA’s under their employ to attend CPD accredited workshops.

**Address / Enquiries**

Duly compiled applications or written enquiries may be sent to:

The Registrar HPCSA - P O Box 205, PRETORIA, 0001
THE ROLL-OUT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT INSPECTORS (EMI’s) IN MUNICIPALITIES, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

By Jerry Chaka

The Environmental Health Profession must give full support to these additional responsibilities.

The roll out of the bridging course designed for Environmental Health Practitioners to be trained as Environmental Management Inspectors will be taking place effective from this year.

A meeting to finalise the roll-out hosted by the Department of Environmental Affairs was held at Protea Hotel, Kempton Park on 31 May 2012. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), South African Institution of Environmental Health (SAIEH), the Department of Health (DOH) and Universities of Technology training EHP’s were all stakeholders with the Department of Environmental Affairs in ushering in the five days (40hrs) bridging course to train Environmental Health Practitioners as Environmental Management Inspectors in South Africa. This meeting was a follow-up meeting for all stakeholders after two main stakeholders meetings that were held in January 2010 and last year to reach an agreement on the bridging course as well as the programme.

The Department of Environmental Affairs, prior to this meeting, received the requisite approval from the Director-General in the Department of Environmental Affairs that Universities of Technology could present the EMI bridging training programme to Environmental Health Practitioners who are trained Peace Officers. Concurrently the Provincial Environmental departments (authorities) processed the designation of municipal officials as Environmental Management Inspectors through their respective MEC’s.

The main objectives of the meeting were to:

- Inform attendees of the current status quo of the designation of local authority officials as EMI’s within their respective Provinces.
- Inform attendees of the current status quo of the EMI-EHP Bridging Training Programme with specific tertiary institutions.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders (HPCSA; SAIEH; DOH; Tertiary Institutions; Provincial Environmental Authorities and DEA) in the future implementation of this project.
- Introduce provincial EMI local authority nodal points to their corresponding tertiary education institutions representatives for purposes of future collaboration.
- Develop joint provincial action plans to facilitate the effective implementation of the EMI-EHP Bridging Training Programme.

All stakeholders committed themselves to the realisation of the EMI-EHP Bridging Training Programme. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by all stakeholders, committing themselves to the roles and responsibilities of the programme. Provincial action plans were also developed with tertiary institutions, committing themselves to the roll out of the bridging Training Programme. Provincial EMI nodal points made a commitment to support Tertiary Institutions in the initial implementation stages of the training programme. It should be noted that Tertiary Institutions with the support of the Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners also agreed to include the training programme in the professional B-degree for Environmental Health to be introduced in the near future.

Different dates for the implementation of the EMI-EHP Bridging Training Programmes were given by the Tertiary Institutions, based on their readiness. The Durban University of Technology...
was first to commit to an earlier date of July 2012, whilst other tertiary institutions committed to 2013 and others had to consult with their principals regarding the implementation date.

Environmental Health Practitioners employed by municipalities must communicate these arrangements to their respective municipalities and urge municipalities to budget for the training of their staff either through their Workplace skills plans funds or other internal funds of the municipalities. This course, whilst it is similar to the one offered by the University of Pretoria is cheaper and there is also the advantage that it will also take the EHP only one week out of work as compared to the six month course. Once the EHP has undergone the training, the professional will be designated as an Environmental Management Inspector by the relevant Provincial MEC for Environment empowering the practitioner to exercise relevant EMI's powers.

The Environmental Health Profession must give full support to these additional responsibilities in the pursuit of addressing more environmental evils which are part of the scope of the profession for Environmental Health Practitioners.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSION AND THE NEW HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (HEQF)

By Dr Stanley Mukhola

During recent years attention has been placed on environmental health as a basis for disease prevention. History has shown us that the single most important factor in reducing mortality was neither the introduction of antibiotics nor the development of modern day medical care. Gavin et al (2006) indicates that the most important factor in reducing mortality is by securing clean drinking water and providing good sanitation. Yet in South Africa we are inclined to put first curative at the expense of environmental influences on health.

Environmental Health Care professionals are in the unique position to influence health of the community in a direct manner. Their scope of practice enables them to prevent diseases before they occur. They are mainly schooled in environmental protection and have knowledge on disease prevention and the causes thereof.

The Profession of Environmental Health has transformed for many years from Sanitary Inspectors, Health Inspectors, and Environmental Health Officers into Professional Environmental Health Practitioners and connects this journey to other training initiatives in the Republic of South Africa. On May 20, 2011 Emperors Palace the Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners approved the new curriculum for implementation in 2014 of a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health in the field of Health sciences and Social Services for training of environmental health practitioners in the prevention of diseases. This qualification is pitched at NQF level 8 and commands 480 credits of which 60 is allocated in work integrated learning.

Environmental health practitioners have long been part of the health scene in South Africa and most of the
African States. Unfortunately these professionals have been placed at the bottom of the heap, and the entire health system was focused on curative means rather than prevention. While the so called “health inspectors” in the olden days were there to enforce hygiene and sanitation regulations devised by parliament, the new journey begun in 2008 with the development of an environmental health degree for South Africa, This was presented to some of the African states in Malawi in 2010 and was well received. The environment which encompases the chemical, physical and the biological agents to which we are exposed, along with our lifestyles; plays an important role in the development of chronic diseases. The current view by Patricia (2002) is that most chronic diseases arise from complex interactions of multiple genes and environmental exposure, therefore the prevention of most human diseases to be undertaken by environmental health practitioners will require a thorough understanding of environmental conditions within the community.

This is a special time in the history of environmental health where a curriculum will empower the environmental health practitioner to be a competent and environmental specialist as well as a researcher. Environmental health practitioners understand the importance of prevention and take the time to tailor preventive messages to meet the developmental and situational needs of the communities through the presence of environmental health practitioners in the community and worksites. Environmental health practitioners provide site and context specific health care that simultaneously addresses immediate health needs. A ubiquitous presence of environmental health practitioners provides them with an opportunity to assume leadership roles in local and national efforts to reduce environmental health threats to our citizens. Still, for the most part environmental health practitioners remain an under recognised and underutilised source of expertise in environmental health efforts. The national environmental health curriculum has evolved rapidly over the past 40 years, and this new curriculum can benefit from the broad view of health that environmental health practitioners bring to the table.

The purpose of the new curriculum is to provide practitioners who will be able to meet the requirements to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa and work as independent practitioners. The new curriculum will provide practitioners who will be able to improve the health of the community and the environment and contribute to sustainable development. The new cadre will be able to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of control measures in order to make necessary improvements. They will further be able to apply research skills and interpret and apply legislation, regulations and policies related to environmental health and educate role players on non-specific issues.

Access to this qualification will be open to learners in possession of national certificates at NQF level 4 and such learners will have to meet the additional requirements as stipulated by the Environmental Health Professional Board and Higher Education Institutions concerned. Practicing environmental health officers who wish to convert from their current qualification in order to register for a master of science in environmental health will also be given an opportunity to do so as in the past with the National Higher Diploma into B tech. The total fundamental credit of this qualification is 120 credits at NQF level 5 = 96 credits; NQF level six = 24 credits while the core: 270 credits (NQF level 6, 7 and 8). Work integrated learning will form an important part of this training with a total of 60 credits at NQF level 6, 7 and 8 with 20 credits each level. Of critical importance will be a research component that will prepare learners for a Master Degree which command 30 credits at NQF level 8.

It is clear that improvement in public health must be predicated on preventing diseases, currently this much is known using estimates of global disease burden, 25%-33% of disease occurrence is linked to environmental exposure while as many as 1.4 billion urban residents breath air that exceeds World Health Organisation quality guidelines, Patricia (2002).

Historically our professional forebears did a huge amount of preventive environmental health work to reduce disease and premature death particularly in the area of infectious disease prevention which allows us today an improved life expectancy that is much increased from many years ago.

What is environmental health anyway?

One of our professional forebears Larry Gordon who according to Blake (2007) indicates that environmental health is valuable, environmental health is essential, environmental health is marketable, the market has not been adequately analysed and understood and marketing efforts have been commenced with no or poorly defined targets in sight and have failed to reach and effectively influenced the market.

Environmental Health Practitioners, maybe we are our own worst enemies in preferring to be invisible over being in the limelight?
WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS 2012

By Jerry Chaka

The International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) declared 26 September as World Environmental Health Day (WEHD) through a Proclamation adopted in Bali, Indonesia on 26 September 2011. This World Environmental Health Day celebration was held on 26 September 2012 in Queenstown, Eastern Cape. The national theme of the South African WEHD was “Placing Environmental Health at the Heart of Human Health”.

Celebrations building up to the WEHD were held in different Provinces and municipalities around the country. Celebrations known to me took place in the North West Province at Rustenburg on 21 September 2012 organised by Bojanala-Platinum District Municipality and the North West Provincial Health Department and the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality held its WEHD celebrations on 26 September 2012 in Tembisa, Ekurhuleni. Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality held its celebrations on 28 September 2012 and the Jo’burg City held its celebrations on 05 October 2012.

The focus of the WEHD celebrations was to recognise the dedication and hard work of Environmental Health Practitioners and the Environmental Health profession in improving the lives of the South African population to raise awareness to the general public on environmental health and the essential services provided by these professionals, to strengthen environmental health services delivery through the launch of national Environmental Health Policies and to re-align and pay a particular focus on environmental health as a health service forming a critical component of primary health care services within the South African context.

Over six hundred Environmental Health Practitioners gathered at Queenstown to celebrate this important date in the calendar of Environmental Health globally. The celebrations were opened by the Mayor of Chris Hani District Municipality, Councillor Koyo who acknowledged the important role of Environmental Health Practitioners in the delivery of health services in the country, including his municipality. He highlighted the challenges of climate change and located the Environmental Health Practitioner as an important role player in the mitigation of climate change and its negative impact on communities and the environment.

An address was delivered by the President of the South African Institute of Environmental Health, Mr Selva Mudaly. Emphasis was placed on the important role that Environmental Health plays in the prevention of diseases. Achievements and challenges faced by the Environmental Health discipline were outlined and the important role environmental health is playing in the re-engineering of primary health care and the National Health Insurance.

A presentation was made by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) on the funding model for environmental health, the review of the funding model as well as components of the funding model. An emphasis was made on the model that could adequately address the funding needs for environmental health in South Africa to ensure adequate coverage of environmental health services country wide.

The keynote address was delivered by Mxolisi Dimaza who is the Chairperson of the Health Portfolio Committee in the Eastern Province legislature. He emphasised that curative
COUNCIL APPOINTS A NEW REGISTRAR / CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dr Buyiswa Mjamba-Matshoba was appointed after a rigorous selection process from across the country which saw applications from leaders in the South African healthcare industry. Dr Mjamba-Matshoba takes over the post from Acting Registrar and CEO, Dr Kgosi Letlape, who has steered the HPCSA in the last few months while the selection process was underway.

Well-known in the medical industry, Dr Mjamba-Matshoba was previously the General Manager/Chief Director of the Eastern Cape Department of Health, a position she served in since 2002. She also held the post of General Manager: Quality Health Care Assurance Systems at the Eastern Cape Department of Health. Before that she was Chief Superintendent at the East London Hospital Complex (which included the Frere and Cecilia Makiwane Hospitals).

This medical practitioner, who was born and bred in the Eastern Cape, has come to Pretoria with two key focus areas - to bring around a turnaround in service delivery and to create partnerships between practitioners, the public and the Council.

Her past experiences in the service delivery and quality assurance fields made her the obvious choice to lead the regulator into the future.

“One of my first priorities will be looking at our processes and systems and see how we could better serve our practitioners.”

Having been involved in healthcare her entire career, she understands the frustration some practitioners are experiencing and is busy looking at areas that may have been perceived as being slow in the organisation. “We need to make things as effective as possible for our practitioners - that is one of the reasons why the Council was established”, she passionately explains.

President of the HPCSA, Professor Sam Mokgokong, welcomed Dr Mjamba-Matshoba to her new position, and said it was a dawn of a new era. “We are ecstatic at being able to secure someone like Dr Mjamba-Matshoba to lead the HPCSA into the future,” Professor Mokgokong said, “Right now South African healthcare professionals face an immense number of challenges and opportunities, and we feel she is the right person to lead the HPCSA forward.”
Environmental Health Practitioners at Musina, Peter Mugwena and David Ramuthugi initiated a clean-up campaign at Beit Bridge Border Post with the support from officials working in and around the border post including the officials from the Zimbabwean side. The campaign was stimulated by uncontrolled littering within the border post.

It was attended by 125 officials from both Zimbabwe and South Africa in celebrating World Environment Day. People were divided into two groups where one was focusing on the street markets on the South African side and the other just across - the Limpopo River on the Zimbabwean side.

In order to strengthen the relationship, officials were encouraged to mix during the campaign:

• Due to a lack of capacity from the Zimbabwean side, the Musina Local Municipality Technical Department, together with a private company called Multi Net, collected the refuse at different points and transported it to the Musina local landfill site using refuse tractors;
• Vhembe District Municipality supported the clean-up campaign by issuing hand gloves, nose masks and refuse bags, while Musina Local Municipality brought additional refuse bags, spades and hand rakes,
• South African Port Health provided catering and Beit Bridge Central Coordinating Offices donated R2000 that was used to supplement the catering.

Mr Jerry Chaka (Chairperson of the Professional Board for Environmental Health Practitioners) applauded these practitioners and said “the Board really appreciates and encourages practitioner participation in such campaigns, as such initiatives improve environmental conditions, change community attitudes and prevent environmental pollution. This initiative is also unique in that it brought together two African countries, both with a mission of creating better environments for their communities. This initiative was fully supported by the Board.

A friendly reminder that annual fees are due before 1 April 2013.

Annual fees are determined by the amount needed to cover all financial obligations of the Professional Board, including the Professional Board’s contribution to the running of the Council.

During the budget discussion Professional Board members always negotiate for the lowest fees possible.

Alternative strategies are investigated by the Professional Board in an attempt to limit further increases in annual fees.

Please note that we do not accept cash on our premises. Please retain receipts or evidence and submit with relevant documentation.

For your convenience, you have three easy payment options to choose from:

1. Direct or Internet Banking
2. Debit order - Please consult our website for more information and complete the debit order form and send back to us
3. Credit card – Please consult our website for more information and complete the credit card authorisation form
   • Please use your seven digit registration number and correct Register (e.g. Hi 0000000) as the reference;
   • Please note that payments into the hpcs accounts will take 2-3 working days to reflect, if done electronically and 24 working hours if done by direct transfer;
   • Please take note of the above, especially if you intend visiting our offices to register.

BANKING DETAILS FOR PAYMENT OF FEES
Bank: ABSA
Branch: Arcadia
Branch Code: 33 49 45
Account number: 405 00 33 481 (Annual fees ONLY)

Include your HPCSA registration number as reference.

KINDLY QUOTE YOUR HPCSA REGISTRATION NUMBER AS THE REFERENCE NUMBER TO ENSURE PAYMENT IS ALLOCATED TO YOUR NAME.
The e-Bulletin is a monthly electronic-newsletter from the Council.

We are looking for new ways of strengthening our communication with you.

Through this short but informative read, we would like to touch on important issues for the professions and also share relevant information with you. E-Bulletin is a platform to engage with you, so please ensure we have your correct e-mail and other contact details.

Please send us an email to update your details: records@hpcsa.co.za

What happens if your contact details are incorrect?

Practitioners have to update their correct details with the Council to ensure:

- They receive pertinent information communicated by the Board;
- They receive their practising cards timeously;
- They receive the Board Newsletter, e-Bulletin and Bulletin; and
- They also receive the request to submit their CPD portfolios for Audit on time.
Practitioners who practise any of the health professions falling within the ambit of the HPCSA are obliged to register with Council as a statutory body. The role of the HPCSA, apart from guiding the professions, is to:

**Confer professional status**
- The right to practise your profession
- Ensuring no unqualified person practises your profession
- Recognising you as a competent practitioner who may command a reward for services rendered

**Set standards of professional behaviour**
- Guiding you on best practices in healthcare delivery
- Contributing to quality standards that promote the health of all South Africans
- Acting against unethical practitioners

**Ensure your Continuing Professional Development through:**
- Setting and promoting the principles of good practice to be followed throughout your career.
- By keeping you up to date with healthcare trends
- Improving client care skills

Practitioners who are not practising their profession may in terms of section 19(1)(c) of the Health Professions Act 1974 (Act 56 of 1974) request that their name be removed from the relevant Register on a voluntary basis. A written request should reach Council before 31 March of the year in which the practitioner wishes his or her name to be removed from the Register.
Environmental Health News is a newsletter for practitioners registered with the Professional Board for Environmental Health. It is produced by the Public Relations and Service Delivery department, HPCSA building, 2nd floor, 553 Madiba street, Arcadia, Pretoria.

Practitioners are encouraged to forward their contributions to Sipho Mbele at siphom@hpcsa.co.za

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