



SASLHA's Monthly

Newsletter

Issue 9: March 2025



Dear SASLHA Community

Welcome to a critical edition of ECHO that goes beyond our usual updates. This issue reveals how SASLHA is actively shaping the future of speech therapy and audiology in South Africa.

Charting Our Professional Future - Why This Matters to You!

We're not just an association, we're your professional champions for audiologists and speech therapists, working tirelessly behind the scenes to:

- Protect your **professional interests**
- Secure your **career sustainability**
- **Advocate** for fair healthcare policies
- **Expand recognition** of speech and audiology services



Stay **Informed.**
Stay **Connected.**
Stay **Empowered.**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.saslha.com





We've taken a bold stand by **joining the UHAC Coalition**, signing an alternative proposal to the NHI Bill directly to President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Simultaneously, we're addressing critical challenges in healthcare pricing:

The National Health Insurance (NHI) Act: What Does It Mean for Audiologists & Speech Therapists in private and public sectors?

The NHI aims to create a single, state-funded health system, where healthcare services are centrally purchased and provided to all South Africans, regardless of income.

However, this has key implications for our professions:

✓ **Uncertainty Around Private Practice** – Under the current NHI framework, medical schemes may be restricted in funding services covered by NHI. This could limit opportunities for audiologists and speech therapists working in private practice.

✓ **Reimbursement & Service Pricing** – The government will set standard tariffs for services, which may impact the financial viability of private practices if reimbursement rates are not sustainable.

✓ **Employment & Workforce Challenges** – With centralisation, public sector workloads may increase, but there's little clarity on how many audiologists and speech therapists will be employed by the state. This could affect job security and working conditions.

✓ **Limited Patient Choice** – Patients may have fewer options in choosing specialists, impacting continuity of care and multidisciplinary team collaboration.



Draft Interim Block Exemption for Tariff Determination: What It Means for You

The Block Exemption Regulations represent a significant shift in private healthcare pricing, with critical implications for our professions:

Key Concerns for Private Practitioners:

- ✓ **Government-Controlled Pricing:** The Department of Health is leading the pricing process, potentially limiting practitioners' ability to set fair service rates.
- ✓ **Hospital Tariffs Dilemma:** Consultation fees may be regulated, but high-cost hospital procedures and equipment remain unchecked, exacerbating affordability issues for specialised services.
- ✓ **Legal Uncertainty:** The use of the Competition Act for healthcare price control is being challenged, creating potential instability for private practitioners.
- ✓ **Service Quality at Risk:** Restrictive tariffs could compromise the sustainability of private practices, ultimately reducing access to quality care.



Navigating Uncertain Waters

- Challenging potential **restrictions** on private practice
- Fighting for **fair reimbursement rates**
- Protecting **job security** and working conditions
- Ensuring patient choice and **quality of care**

COMPARATIVE
SUMMARY



MTIC
REGULATIONS





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ELDERLY CARE REVOLUTION: HEARING HEALTH MATTERS



We're engaging with the National Department of Health for the **integration of audiology services into national elderly care policies**:

- Pushing for mandatory hearing and **fall risk screenings**
- **Expanding access** to hearing healthcare
- **Reducing communication barriers** for seniors
- **Preventing cognitive decline** associated with hearing loss

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BREAKING NEW GROUND WITH DISCOVERY HEALTH

We're revolutionising professional recognition through:

- Developing and motivating a **new billing code for Fall Risk Screening**
- **Formalising audiologists' role** in preventative healthcare
- Creating **financial sustainability** for practitioners
- **Reducing overall healthcare costs** through prevention





BECOME A MEMBER

Our Commitment: More Than Just Membership

SASLHA stands as a unified voice for both speech therapists and audiologists. We're not just an association, we're your strategic partner in professional growth.

Why Advocacy Trumps Everything

Advocacy is the cornerstone of our profession's sustainability. It's about:

- Shaping national healthcare policies
- Securing fair compensation
- Expanding professional recognition
- Protecting your right to provide critical healthcare services

Our advocacy efforts do more than protect today, they build the foundation for tomorrow's healthcare landscape.

Join the Movement!

Whether you're a member or not, your profession needs a strong, unified voice. SASLHA is that voice.

Stay Informed. Stay Connected. Stay Empowered.

Annaline Jack
SASLHA CEO

BECOME A MEMBER





Explore the
SASLHA 2025 Events Calendar
& see what's in store for
YOUR membership tier!

Ready to **LEARN, GROW & LEAD**
with SASLHA?



LEARN MORE



SAVE THE DATE

**17-19
OCTOBER
2025**

ENT/SASLHA CONGRESS



PORT ELIZABETH

SASLHA's Congress Organising Committee, is working toward a dynamic format that ensures real, practical upskilling for all attendees. Expect definite 'take-home' knowledge, strategies, and techniques that you can immediately apply in your practice. Mark your calendars for this must-attend event—early bird registration details coming soon!

CONGRESS WEBSITE

