

# CONFERENCE REPORT: 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF AFRICA HEALTH CONGRESS

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The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Africa Health Congress took place at the Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa from 8–10 June 2016. Africa Health is the continent's largest healthcare exhibition and is a leading platform for the industry to meet, learn and do business. There were 17 CPD accredited conferences that brought together locally and internationally acclaimed speakers to discuss, showcase and share their experiences and insights into the latest methods, developments and technologies in the healthcare industry. The congress featured a combination of clinical and non-clinical conferences and introduced six brand new tracks: Wound Care, Gastroenterology, Clinical Engineering (in association with CEASA & IFMBE), Medical Managers (in association with SASMM), South African Preventive Medicine (in association with SAPHMA), and Health Technology Assessment (in association with SAHTAS). Delegates to All Africa Health conferences were charged at a nominal fee of R100 per conference, and all proceeds were donated to the local charity, Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa (CHOC).

Five staff members of the School of Nursing Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University, attended the Nursing Conference on Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2016. The theme of the nursing conference was 'getting involved with policy making'. The conference targeted nurse educators, nurse practitioners, directors of nursing, heads of nursing, registered nurses, nursing assistants and nurse managers. Key topics presented included nurse involvement in health policy, nursing education meeting the healthcare needs of South Africa, as well as the power and policy development in nursing. Other benefits of attending the nursing conference were to:



- Appraise the role of nursing leadership in driving policy at service level
- Debate the impact of health and education policy on the nursing profession
- Assess how much nurses can be involved in policy making

The nursing conference featured a wide range of acclaimed speakers in nursing, including Prof Abel Jacobus Pienaar (Chairperson: Education Committee, South African Nursing Council), Dr Estelle Coustas (Nursing Executive: Mediclinic), Florence Africa (Former Nursing Director: Western Cape Government: Department of Health), Prof Hester Klopper (CEO: Forum for University Nursing Deans of South Africa), Nelouise Geyer (CEO: Nursing Education Association), Dr Sue Armstrong (Senior Lecturer: University of Witwatersrand) and Tendani Mabunda (Senior Manager: Nursing Services: Tygerberg Hospital).

The keynote address was given by the CEO of FUNDISA, Prof Hester Klopper, who talked about nurses' involvement in health policy. Prof Klopper reminded conference delegates that nurses make up the majority of the human resources for health. She concluded to say that no health can function without nurses. There were two panel discussions at the conference. The first panel discussion focused on 'Nursing education meeting the healthcare needs of South Africa', and the second panel discussion focused on 'integrated nursing policy. Both panel discussions were very informative and improved my knowledge on getting involved with policy making in the nursing profession. From the conference, one can conclude that it is important for all nurses to get involved with policy making at both private and public sectors in order to address nursing issues appropriately.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the School of Nursing Science, Faculty, of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University for enabling me to attend the conference. For more information about the conference visit <http://www.africahealthexhibition.com/>