



THE HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION SOUTH AFRICA

Celebrating More than 40 Years of Heart and Brain Health

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

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CEO's Report



Prof. Pamela Naidoo

The key message underpinning the mission of the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) is to reduce the burden of heart disease, strokes and the associated risk factors. This message informs our strategic direction and programme implementation and remains as relevant today as it was when the organization was founded 46 years ago. In South Africa the HSFSA is central to the shift from communicable diseases, such as HIV, to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular and cerebrovascular conditions (CVD). Nationally, 51 % of all deaths is due to NCDs and CVD makes up an estimated 18% of all NCDs deaths. While the Foundation has positively impacted population level knowledge about CVD through various media platforms and programme implementation, increasingly more work needs to be done to reduce the number of deaths and disability linked to the condition. A particular concern is the fact that the age band affected by CVD is getting younger with a greater number of those younger than age 60 having hypertension, diabetes type II, strokes and cardiac conditions.

Despite global and in-country challenges having an adverse ripple effect on the social and economic progress in South Africa, the Foundation has safeguarded its sustainability efforts and retained its primary donors, attracted new donors, consistently implemented programmes across the life-span and engaged local and international collaborations. At a glance our reach and impact has been fairly impressive and this success was enabled by good budgeting of donor-funded revenue, as well as other income-generating activities, including the Heart Mark Food Endorsement Programme. In real terms our reach through face-to-face community-based programmes and all forms of media is as follows during the 2026 financial year:

- Health Talks; Health Information Tables; Mended Hearts and Stroke Groups; Health Risk Assessments and the Schools Health Promotion Initiative: 70 411 individuals. The FAST Heroes, Stroke Awareness Team reached more than 15 000 children.
- Various media platforms: 862 591 498 individuals reached.





Using a public health approach, the Foundation's population-level reach is amplified during our well-established campaigns such as Salt Awareness Week, World Hypertension Day, Heart Awareness Month and World Stroke Week.

Nutrition Science remains one of the hallmarks of the Foundation. The Heart Mark Endorsement Programme is robust and well recognized as a leading guide for healthy food products that assist in the prevention of CVD, as well as the promotion of overall health. At least 65% of companies that are Heart Mark holders have been a part of the Endorsement programme for 10 or more years. Moreover, these companies have added many more food items to their Heart Mark basket. An increasing number of new potential Heart Mark holders are in the plant-based food business. In this financial year, the first set of Asian spices products (Perimas) fulfilled the criteria for Heart Mark and now carries the logo. Financially, the Heart Mark has been a stable income generator for the Foundation. This fact has enabled the on-going health promotion and disease prevention, evidence-based efforts, to reduce the number of individuals affected by CVD. These initiatives, detailed in this report, speak directly to our mission and vision.

Aligning with national, continent-wide and global organizational health non-profit principles, the Foundation has established and continues to seek collaborations, partnerships and relationships with reputable agencies such as the World Heart Federation, World Stroke Organization, African Stroke Organization, the African Heart Federation and the SANCDA. In addition, we have a range of stakeholders from science bodies to well-intentioned industry partners that are dedicated to contributing to public good. In keeping with global technological advancements, the Foundation continues to utilize real-time data to inform and improve its programmes and various pillars of work. Our digital data collection allows us to disaggregate data for a deeper understanding of the health profiles of the communities we serve. We know that hypertension, obesity and inadequate eating patterns are risk factors for CVD within the private and public sector communities we serve. Hence, our knowledge dissemination hones in on these factors due to the fact that an estimated 50% of adults we screen are borderline or hypertensive, one in three women and one in four men are overweight or obese, and at least 25% of those screened

consume salt in excess. Through information gathering using various strategies, the HSFSa is continuing to develop the methodologies for identifying risk and ensuring that these individuals are linked to health care. At a policy level and as part of civil society, we are also working with the National Department of Health and other stakeholders to ensure that there are continued efforts to strengthen the health system so that more South Africans get access to good quality care.

In this financial year, our audit reveals a financially stable organization with strong governance processes in place. Heart Mark continues to drive our income generation, followed by company and individual donors. While the HSFSa knows it is impactful in the work it implements, we acknowledge that activities do remain restricted due to the lack of capacity to scale our work to all nine provinces in South Africa. Greater funding is required to increase our footprint and we are, therefore, consistently attempting to attract new funding sources to increase impact for the reduction of CVD and increasing the productivity levels of all South Africans. As always, our committed partners and donors deserve special mention. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Willowton Group, Lucky Star, Joekels, Liberty: The Standard Bank Group, Pharma Dynamics, and Boehringer Ingelheim for their generosity in providing financial resources for our operational functioning and programmes. We would also like to thank Dischem, Bathic Publishers, Highbury Media and other media houses for their in-kind support which is fundamental to population-level reach. Last but certainly not least, thank you to our Board Chair and Board members for their skilled input and dedication to our health NPC. Their regular input into the Foundation's strategic direction is invaluable. Of course, the visibility of our work is not possible without our staff who are responsible for the outreach programmes, as well as the in-house operations. A huge acknowledgement to the HSFSa staff.

Yours in Heart and Brain Health



Sincerely
Prof Pamela Naidoo



Chairperson's Report



Nanette Crouse

Dear Members, Partners, Supporters and Friends of the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa. It is my privilege, as Chairperson of the Board of the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA), to present my report for the financial year ended 31 March 2026. This has been a year in which the importance of the Foundation's mission has become even more evident. Cardiovascular disease and stroke remain among the most significant causes of premature death and disability in South Africa, while the age at which people are developing cardiovascular risk factors continues to decrease.

Against this challenging backdrop, I am proud to report that HSFSA has continued to deliver meaningful programmes, strengthen its partnerships, protect its financial sustainability and maintain its position as a respected voice in cardiovascular and cerebrovascular health. Our purpose remains clear: to halt the rise in premature deaths through cardiovascular disease and promote healthier lifestyles across South Africa.

A year of meaningful impact

The numbers tell an important part of our story. During the year, HSFSA's Health Promotion and Health Risk Assessment activities, Health Talks, Health Information Tables, Mended Hearts and Stroke Groups and School Health Promotion Initiative reached 70,411 individuals. The FAST Heroes stroke-awareness programme reached more than 15,000 children, while our various media platforms extended our reach to 862 591 498 people. These numbers are significant, but the true measure of our work is what sits behind them: people who were encouraged to know their blood pressure, understand their cardiovascular risk, recognise the symptoms of a stroke, make healthier food choices, seek medical attention earlier and, in many cases, share that knowledge with their families and communities. Our Health Risk Assessment programme remains particularly important. The Foundation is not simply creating awareness; it is increasingly using screening and data to identify risk and

support linkage to appropriate healthcare services. The data collected also gives us a clearer understanding of the health challenges within the communities we serve.

Prevention starts early

One of the Foundation's most exciting areas of impact is our work with children and schools. The School Health Promotion Initiative continues to provide young South Africans with practical knowledge about healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco and vaping prevention and heart and brain health. The partnership with FAST Heroes takes this one step further by equipping children to recognise stroke symptoms and share potentially life-saving knowledge with their families. This is precisely the type of intervention that can create long-term change. Prevention cannot start when cardiovascular disease has already developed. It must begin early and become part of a person's lifelong understanding of health. The Board therefore sees continued investment in children, schools, families and workplaces as an important component of HSFSa's future strategy.

Evidence-based nutrition and the Heart Mark

Nutrition remains one of HSFSa's defining areas of expertise. The Heart Mark Food Endorsement Programme continues to be a particularly valuable asset to the Foundation. There are currently 54 fee-paying Heart Mark clients and 314 endorsed products, with the programme applying a rigorous assessment process supported by laboratory testing and nutritional criteria.

Importantly, at least 65% of Heart Mark companies have been involved in the programme for ten years or more, demonstrating the strength and longevity of these relationships. The growth of interest from plant-based food businesses and the addition of new product categories also demonstrate the opportunity to develop the programme further. From a Board perspective, Heart Mark represents much more than an income stream. It is an important mechanism through which HSFSa can influence the food environment, support healthier consumer choices and engage directly with industry. We should therefore continue to protect the credibility and scientific integrity of Heart Mark while exploring opportunities for responsible growth.





Research, knowledge and advocacy

HSFSA's role extends beyond community education. The Foundation continues to contribute to research, scientific discussion, professional education and health policy. During the year, the Nutrition Science team distributed twelve editions of its CVD research updates to more than 2,000 healthcare professionals, scientists, academics and interest groups. The Foundation's research and publications also demonstrate the depth of expertise within HSFSA and its broader professional network, including work relating to nutrition, stroke care, diabetes, electronic health records, artificial intelligence and food policy.

Our partnerships with organisations including the World Heart Federation, World Stroke Organization, African Stroke Organization, African Heart Federation and SANCDA position HSFSA within a wider South African, African and international health ecosystem.

This creates an important opportunity for HSFSA to increasingly position itself as a South African centre of trusted knowledge, prevention, advocacy and evidence-based cardiovascular health information. Financial sustainability and stewardship

As a Board, we have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that the Foundation remains financially sustainable and that donor and stakeholder resources are managed prudently. I am pleased that the 2026 annual financial statements have been independently audited, with the auditors expressing the opinion that the financial statements fairly present, in all material respects, the financial position and performance of HSFSA in accordance with IFRS for SMEs and the Companies Act. The Foundation recorded an operating surplus of R6.95 million and a total surplus of R9.13 million, compared with R7.22 million in the previous year. At year-end, total assets were approximately R63.22 million, including R42.5 million in investments, while cash and cash equivalents were approximately R12.2 million. Total reserves increased to approximately R33.2 million. These figures provide a sound platform from which to continue our work, but they should not create complacency. HSFSA remains dependent on donations to fund the balance of its operating activities, and our financial policy appropriately seeks to preserve capital

within designated reserves while using investment income to support sustainability. For this reason, financial strength must be viewed to achieving greater impact, rather than an end in itself.

Our partners and sponsors

No non-profit organisation can deliver sustainable impact without committed partners. On behalf of the Board, I extend our sincere appreciation to the organisations and individuals who have supported HSFSa during the year.

Particular thanks go to Willowton Group, Lucky Star, Joekels, Liberty, Standard Bank Group, Pharma Dynamics, Boehringer Ingelheim, Unilever and Dischem, together with the many other corporate partners and donors who have contributed to our programmes and operational. We also recognise the invaluable in-kind contribution of media and other partners, including Highbury Media, Bathic Publishers, Good News Community Radio, Disa FM, Eldos FM, Wild Coast Radio, Radio Namakwaland, Mail & Guardian and HEITA Magazine.

The Foundation also remains deeply grateful to the families and individuals who support HSFSa through donations, trusts and bequests. Every contribution, whether financial, professional, product-based, media-related or through the giving of time and expertise, helps us extend our reach.

Looking ahead: the next two to three years

The Board believes that HSFSa now has an important opportunity to move from sustainability to strategic growth. Our challenge is not a lack of relevance. It is the opposite: the cardiovascular health burden in South Africa is so significant that our existing capacity cannot reach all those who need our programmes. The Annual Report acknowledges that the Foundation currently does not have the capacity to scale its work across all nine provinces and that additional funding will be required to increase its footprint. Over the next two to three years, I believe our strategic focus should therefore be built around five priorities:





1. Scale impact without compromising quality

We need to expand our geographic reach, particularly through partnerships that allow HSFSa programmes to be delivered more efficiently and sustainably. Our objective should not simply be to reach more people, but to reach more people with measurable, evidence-based interventions.

2. Diversify and grow sustainable income

Heart Mark is an important and successful foundation of our income model, but long-term sustainability requires a broader funding base. We need to grow corporate partnerships, institutional funding, philanthropic giving, bequests and programme sponsorships, while identifying new opportunities for earned income that remain firmly aligned with our mission. Our 2026 financial statements show Heart Mark revenue of R10.54 million, up from R9.02 million in 2025. At the same time, donations and fundraising were R2.43 million compared with R3.83 million in 2025. This reinforces the importance of continuing to strengthen both our existing income engines and our donor-development strategy.

3. Become increasingly data-driven and digitally enabled

The Foundation has already begun using digital data collection to better understand the health profiles and risk factors of the communities it serves. The next step is to use this information more strategically to demonstrate outcomes, support funding applications, measure programme effectiveness and identify where intervention can make the greatest difference. In a rapidly changing information environment, HSFSa must also continue to be a trusted source of accurate health information, particularly as misinformation becomes increasingly prevalent.

4. Strengthen our influence through partnerships and advocacy

The Foundation should increasingly use its scientific credibility, partnerships and evidence base to influence policy and the broader health environment. Our partnerships across government, academia, healthcare, civil society and industry provide a strong platform from which to advocate for prevention, early detection, healthier food environments, stroke awareness and equitable access to healthcare.

5. Invest in the organisation itself

Growth requires capacity. Over the next three years, the Board will need to ensure that HSFSA has the appropriate people, systems, technology, governance and financial resources to support sustainable growth. We must remain disciplined about expenditure, protect our reserves, maintain strong governance and ensure that every expansion is supported by a credible funding model.

Governance and stewardship

The Board remains committed to responsible governance, transparency and accountability. As directors, we recognise that our responsibility extends beyond approving budgets and overseeing compliance. We are custodians of an organisation that exists for the public good and that carries the trust of donors, beneficiaries, partners, employees and the broader South African community. The audited financial statements confirm that the Foundation remains financially sound and able to continue as a going concern. The directors have also confirmed that they are not aware of any material post-reporting-date event or material regulatory non-compliance affecting the Foundation. Our responsibility now is to ensure that this sound foundation is used wisely.

A message of thanks

I would like to place on record my appreciation to my fellow Board members for their commitment, expertise and willingness to engage constructively on the matters that affect the Foundation. I extend particular appreciation to our CEO, Professor Pamela Naidoo, and to the entire HSFSA team. The work described in the Annual Report is only possible because of the commitment of people who believe deeply in the Foundation's mission. Our staff continue to work across communities, professional networks, schools, workplaces and media platforms to ensure that the message of prevention reaches as many South Africans as possible. I also thank our scientific, healthcare, research, media, corporate and community partners whose collaboration strengthens our impact. And, importantly, I thank every donor and supporter who chooses to invest in the work of HSFSA.



Closing

As we look towards the next chapter of the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa, I believe we have much to be proud of. We have a respected brand, a strong scientific foundation, an established Heart Mark programme, committed staff and Board members, valuable national and international partnerships, and a sound financial base. But we also have a responsibility not to stand still. The cardiovascular disease burden in South Africa demands that we think bigger, work smarter and extend our reach.

Our ambition for the next two to three years should therefore be clear: To protect the sustainability we have built, strengthen the organisation, diversify our income and significantly increase the number of South Africans whose lives we can positively influence. Ultimately, our success will not be measured by the size of our balance sheet or the number of programmes we deliver. It will be measured by whether more people prevent cardiovascular disease, recognise risk earlier, respond faster to stroke, access appropriate care and live longer, healthier lives.

That is the responsibility entrusted to us. That is the opportunity before us and that is the work we must continue to do together, with purpose and with heart.

Thank you.

Nanette Crouse
Chairperson



Gold Sponsor



Board of Directors



Ms Nanette Crouse
(Chairperson)



Mr Farouk Meyer
(Vice Chairperson)



Dr Leshni Shah



Prof Gugu Mchunu



Prof Pamela Naidoo



Mr John Stephenson



Ms Dudu Mthuli



Dr Beulah Pretorius

Vision

To promote cardiovascular health through advocacy, influencing health policy, providing education, information, tools and support which will:

- Empower people to adopt healthy lifestyles for CVD prevention and seek appropriate care early in the disease trajectory.
- Assist the public in making healthier lifestyle choices.

Mission

To halt the rise of premature deaths through CVD in South Africa and promote the adoption of healthy behaviours.

Key Messages

CVD (heart disease, strokes and other circulatory conditions) are the leading cause of premature deaths and disability in the Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) cluster in SA.

- Risk factor reduction is important in reducing CVD incidence and prevalence rates
- Unmodifiable factors for CVD onset include a family history of CVD, raised cholesterol and hypertension, age and gender. Modifiable risk factors include raised blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, alcohol use, tobacco smoking, and

FACTS ABOUT CVD



16.3% of all NCD related deaths in SA are due to heart disease and strokes.



About 6 adults die from a stroke or cardiovascular health-related death every hour in SA.



The World Health Organisation (WHO) lists the top 5 risk factors for CVD onset as unhealthy diets, not exercising regularly, smoking tobacco and drinking alcohol, not managing day-to-day stress, and being overweight or obese.



The heart and blood vessels are highly vulnerable to air pollution, which contributes to heart attacks, stroke, lung disease and cancer.



Tobacco and e-cigarettes are highly addictive and also contribute to air and environmental pollution, resulting in poor health outcomes.

vaping. Pollution, climate change and structural inequalities, including poverty and other barriers are additional factors that negatively influence CVD onset.

- A blood pressure measure of $\geq 140/90$ and Raised “bad” cholesterol (LDL) dramatically increases the risk of CVD (heart disease and stroke) onset.
- Having CVD and one or more other medical condition(s) such as HIV/AIDS or diabetes often results in poor health outcomes without proper access to health care.
- Adoption of healthy behaviours over the life course, even in the face of a genetic predisposition, helps mitigate the risk for CVD onset.
- Self-Management and use of digital technologies among adults who have CVD and those at risk for CVD onset increases health-related quality of life.
- Increasing medical treatment adherence and the uptake of healthy behaviours reduces morbidity and mortality for CVD and comorbidities.

The Global And Local Patterns Of CVD

The Global Context

Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which include CVD (heart disease and strokes), diabetes, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, mental health conditions and other conditions, are the leading cause of death worldwide, moreover, the following statistics need to be highlighted:

1. Tobacco accounts for over 7 million global deaths every year (including from the effects of exposure to second-hand smoke).
2. Alcohol consumption is responsible for approximately 2.6 million deaths globally each year, more than half of these deaths attributed to NCDs.
3. The WHO (2025) states that household air pollution contributed to an estimated 2.9 million premature deaths in 2021.
4. WHO also states that approximately 12% of all ischaemic heart disease deaths and 12% of all stroke deaths are attributable to exposure to household air pollution.





CVD in South Africa

NCDs are estimated to account for approximately 60% of all deaths in SA, which is a middle-income country. According to Statistics SA, stroke accounted for 5.4% of all deaths in 2023 while hypertensive disease, ischaemic heart disease and other forms of heart disease together accounted for approximately 10.9% of deaths. An overview of the risk factors behaviour in SA shows that: an estimated 23.5% of the adult population smoked tobacco and about 8.6 litres of pure alcohol is consumed per person. Moreover, about 44% of South African adults have hypertension and 67.9% of adult women and 38.2% of adult men in SA are either overweight or obese.

Key Health Events and Campaigns

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) continues to drive awareness, primary and secondary prevention and advocacy efforts aimed at reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD), stroke and their associated risk factors. Throughout the year, the Foundation commemorated key national and international health events aligned with the World Health Organisation (WHO), World Heart Federation (WHF), World Stroke Organisation (WSO), World Hypertension League, World Obesity Federation, World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health (WASSH), and the South African National Department of Health.

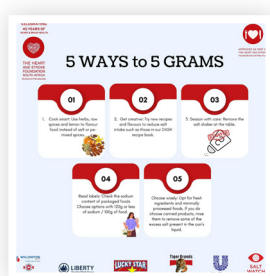
Recognising the evolving public health landscape, the Foundation continues to refine its programmes and campaigns to ensure they remain relevant, responsive and impactful. By incorporating current evidence, best-practices and innovative community-based approaches, we have strengthened our efforts to deepen public health knowledge, promote healthy behaviours, support early detection of medical conditions and address emerging health challenges. This year reflected continued growth in both reach and impact across our communities. By working alongside healthcare professionals, community partners and policymakers, the Foundation continues to empower individuals to make informed health choices and move closer to a future where everyone can live a longer, healthier life, free from the burden of CVD and stroke.

World Health Day: 7 April 2025

In commemoration of World Health Day 2025, the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) joined the WHO and global partners in promoting the theme, ***“Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures.”*** The campaign highlighted the importance of maternal and newborn health and called for increased efforts to prevent avoidable maternal and infant deaths while supporting the long-term health and well-being of women and children.

Through community outreach activities, health education and awareness initiatives, the HSFSA Health Promotion and Health Risk Assessment Programme (HPHRAP) and Nutrition Science teams engaged communities across Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Activities focused on raising awareness of maternal and child health, the importance of antenatal and postnatal care, healthy nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life, and the prevention and early detection of health conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, that can adversely affect both the mother and child. The campaign reinforced the Foundation’s commitment to promoting healthy beginnings as a foundation for lifelong health and reducing the burden of CVD and other NCDs across the life course.

Salt Awareness Week: 12 - 18 May 2025



For Salt Awareness Week, the HSFSA sounded the alarm on the negative impact of excessive salt (sodium) consumption on the nation’s heart and brain health. The HSFSA aligned with the World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health’s (WASSH) theme, ***“5 Ways to 5 Grams”***. This theme highlighted the critical link between salt intake and heart and brain health.

The Nutrition Science team advised the public to gradually reduce salt in recipes and use herbs, spices, and other fresh ingredients instead. The team also encouraged reading food labels and choosing products with low-sodium that have the Heart Mark logo. Additionally, the



team promoted cooking meals at home with nutrient-rich foods like fruits, veggies, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. The importance of incorporating potassium-rich foods to help regulate blood pressure was also highlighted, explaining how potassium counteracts sodium's effects, promoting healthy blood pressure and cardiovascular well-being. The Nutrition Science Team Lead, Ms Shonisani Nephalama, and Dietitian, Ms Cari Erasmus, hosted an interactive HSFA public-oriented webinar titled ***"Salt Savvy - Read Your Food Labels, Reduce Your Risk"***. This webinar focused on educating the public about the negative impact of extra salt on your health. The webinar also had a practical session on making sense of food packaging and learning how to read food labels. Together with the HP&HRAP team numerous community activities and media engagements further enhanced the message to reduce salt intake for improved health outcomes.

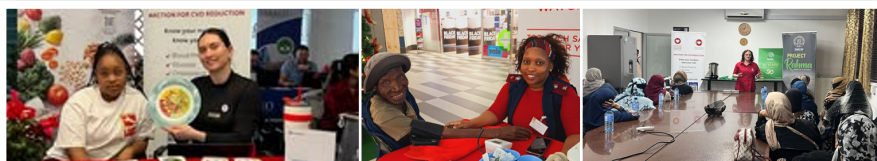
World Hypertension Day: 17 May 2025



**2025 WORLD
HYPERTENSION
DAY MAY 17**

World Hypertension Day is commemorated annually on the 17th of May to raise awareness about the health dangers of raised blood pressure (BP). The HSFA used the global theme: ***"Your Brain and Heart Cannot Take the Pressure!"*** highlighting the importance of maintaining a stable blood pressure for good overall health. The team emphasised that high BP often has no obvious symptoms (is silent) but can cause severe damage to the heart, brain, kidneys and arteries over time if left uncontrolled. The campaign aligned with the World Hypertension League's message ***"Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer"*** and encouraged South Africans to know their BP numbers. It is estimated that 50% of men and 50% of women in South Africa, are hypertensive, yet most are unaware of their status. A key message from the Foundation was the need for regular BP checks, early diagnosis and management.

We also addressed key risk factors, including high salt intake, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco and alcohol use, as well as the role of family history and genetics in blood pressure. Prof Pamela Naidoo, the CEO, stressed that medication adherence and behavioural changes are lifesaving, while our Dietitians, Miss S Nephalama and Miss C Erasmus, shared practical tips on reducing salt to under 5g per day and choosing heart-healthy foods. The initiative aimed to improve awareness, support patient-centred care, and reduce the economic and health burden of hypertension in South Africa. The HP&HRAP team conducted community visits to perform health risk screenings aimed at raising awareness of the importance of regular blood pressure checks. Individuals with elevated blood pressure readings were referred to the nearest clinic or hospital for further assessment and management. These activities supported early detection efforts and reinforced the role of routine screening in reducing the risk of stroke, heart disease and related complications.



The Nutrition Science team organised a CPD-accredited webinar for healthcare professionals titled ***"Hypertension is a silent killer: Salt reduction strategies for hypertension control to protect heart and brain health"***. Learned speakers, Professor Brian Rayner and Dr Beulah Pretorius, presented insights on controlling hypertension, focusing on dietary salt. They shared smarter sodium strategies, emphasising ***"Less Salt, More Life"***.

World No Tobacco Day: 31 May 2025



World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) is commemorated annually on 31 May to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco, nicotine, and electronic vaping devices (EVDS) as well as to advocate for stronger tobacco control policies. The theme, ***"Unmasking the Appeal: Exposing Industry Tactics on Tobacco and Nicotine Products,"*** focused on the growing use of tobacco, vapes and nicotine products among young people and highlighted the industry's marketing strategies aimed at attracting youth. The campaign sought to empower young people with knowledge about the harmful and addictive nature of these products, enabling them to make informed and healthier choices.

Research conducted for the African Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM) at UP indicates a rise in the use of products such as vapes, heated tobacco products, and oral nicotine pouches, particularly among younger populations. In support of the campaign, the HSFSA conducted educational sessions at various schools and communities, raising awareness about the health risks associated with tobacco, vapes and nicotine use and encouraging learners to adopt healthier behaviours. Through these activities, the HSFSA continued to support efforts to prevent nicotine addiction and promote tobacco and nicotine -free communities.

Mandela Day: 18 July 2025



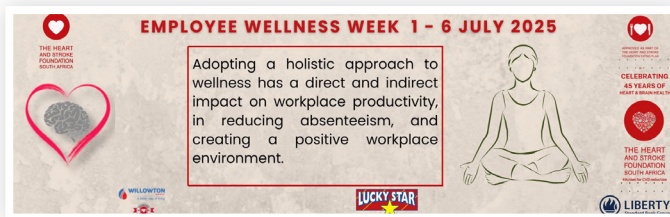
In celebration of Mandela Day, the HSFSA joined individuals and organisations across the country in honouring Nelson Mandela's legacy through service and community engagement. Guided by the theme, ***"It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity,"*** the Foundation recognised the important role that

Early Childhood Development (ECD), food security and equitable communities play in improving health outcomes, and dedicated its efforts to supporting vulnerable communities through health education and awareness activities.

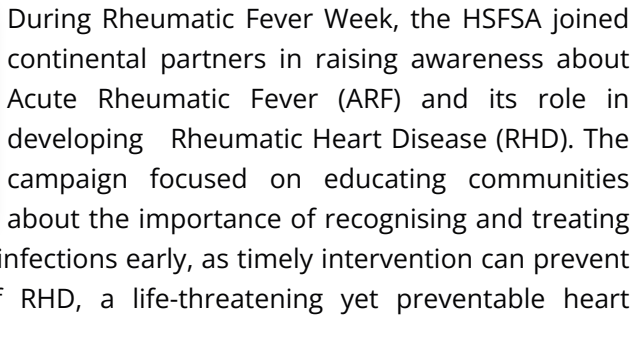
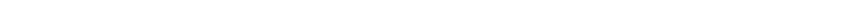
As part of its Mandela Day initiatives, the HSFSa teams across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape provinces conducted health talks and community outreach activities at childcare centres, homes for the aged and community-based organisations. These engagements focused on promoting healthy behaviours, disease prevention and the importance of maintaining good health across all stages of life. The Foundation also partnered with community stakeholders to extend its reach and support underserved populations.

Through these activities, the HSFSa contributed more than just 67 minutes towards creating healthier communities while reinforcing its commitment to health equity, community wellbeing and improving access to health information for those most in need.

Employee Wellness Week: 1 - 6 July 2025



The HSFSa commemorated Employee Wellness Week (EWW) by shining a spotlight on the health and well-being of South Africa's workforce. Recognising that healthy employees are at the heart of productive workplaces, the campaign encouraged organisations to prioritise the physical, mental and emotional well-being of their staff. A sick workforce brings down the socio-economic prosperity of a country.



control and eventual elimination of RHD in Africa. Discussions emphasised the importance of early diagnosis, improved access to healthcare, health education and the availability of essential medicines.

The Foundation's professional teams across South Africa further extended the campaign's reach through community engagements, social media, television, print and radio awareness initiatives, reinforcing the message that early treatment, prevention and access to care remain critical in reducing the burden of RHD in South Africa and across the continent.

Heart Awareness Month: *September 2025*



Heart Awareness Month (HAM) remained one of the HSFA's flagship campaigns, providing a platform to raise awareness about CVD, promote prevention, and encourage South Africans to take charge of their heart health.

Each week of HAM brought on a different but related topic for discussion. The campaign commenced with week one focussing on The Burden of Cardiovascular Disease, highlighting the growing impact of CVD in South Africa, disparities in health outcomes, and the importance of recognising women's heart health. The second week explored Cardiothoracic Interventions, showcasing advances in life-saving cardiac procedures and emphasising the role of organ donation in improving health outcomes. Week three focused on The Role of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), demonstrating the collaborative efforts of healthcare professionals involved in patient care before, during and after cardiac interventions. The final week focused on Cumulative Risk Factors, highlighting how behavioural, environmental and genetic factors collectively influence cardiovascular health. The theme also underscored the importance of evidence-based research and credible health information in combating misinformation and supporting informed health decision-making in an increasingly complex information environment.

HAM also coincided with the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health, reinforcing the global call for stronger prevention strategies, equitable access to care and collective action to address the growing burden of NCDs. A key highlight was the hosting of stakeholder round-table discussions in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, bringing together representatives from healthcare, academia, civil society and industry to explore opportunities for strengthening cardiovascular health in South Africa. The Foundation would like to thank all the respective partners and collaborators for their contributions to make these events successful, including Liberty: the Standard Bank Group, Joekels Tea Packers, The Station Urban Event Space and Lucky Star.



The main objective of the roundtables was to gather, through group discussions, the strengths and limitations of the Foundation's programmes so that changes and revisions can be applied to strengthen the programmes currently being implemented.

Throughout HAM, the Foundation's teams conducted community outreach, health promotion and health risk assessment activities across KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape. Engagements took place at schools, libraries, universities, wellness events and community centres. Through social media, television, radio and print platforms health messages are amplified across the country. The campaign was also integrated into several Foundation programmes, extending its reach to diverse communities and reinforcing the message that prevention, early detection and healthy behavioural choices remain central to reducing the burden of CVD in South Africa.

World Heart Day: 29 September 2025

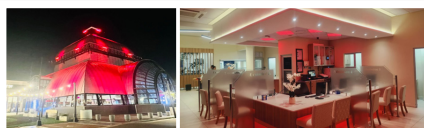


The HSFSa joined the global community in commemorating World Heart Day, marking the 25th anniversary of this important campaign led by the World Heart Federation. The campaign served as the culmination of the Foundation's month-long Heart Awareness Month programme and reinforced the message that every heartbeat matters. Guided by the theme *"Don't Miss a Beat"* the Foundation encouraged South Africans to prioritise their heart health through informed decision-making, regular health screening and timely access to care.



A key highlight of the campaign was the Foundation's Continuing Professional Development (CPD)-accredited webinar, *"The Role of the Cardiologist within the Multidisciplinary Team from Initial Presentation of a Patient: The Referral Pathway for Better Health Outcomes."* Hosted by the HSFSa and presented by Professor DP Naidoo, the webinar provided healthcare professionals with valuable insights into coordinated patient care and the importance of effective referral pathways in improving cardiovascular outcomes. The Foundation also conducted community outreach activities, health risk assessments and educational talks across KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape, supported by extensive television, radio, print and social media engagement.

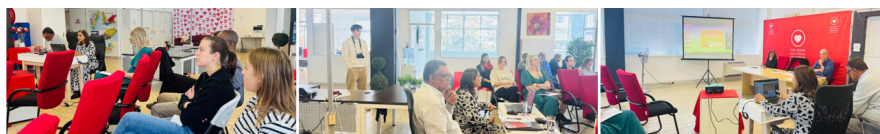
Several landmarks across South Africa participated in the global lighting up in red to raise awareness of CVD. Through partnerships with Heart Mark-endorsed companies and other stakeholders, the Foundation further promoted heart-healthy living and extended the campaign's reach to communities across the country. World Heart Day reinforced the importance of collective action and informed health choices in reducing the burden of CVD and creating healthier communities.



In celebration of World Heart Day, various landmarks across the country, including Sun Coast Casino, Redberry Farm, Pavilion Shopping Centre and Life Healthcare Facilities lit up in red.

The HSFSa's Annual General Meeting: 8 October 2025

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa's (HSFSa) CEO, Prof Pamela Naidoo and Members of the Board convened the annual general meeting (AGM) on 8th October 2025 following the completion of a successful 2025 audit. The hybrid meeting was well attended by the Foundation's stakeholders, partners, collaborators and members of the public.



National Nutrition Week (NNW): 9 -15 October 2025



The HSFSa is committed to supporting the country's annual National Nutrition Week, as nutrition is a cornerstone of our mission to prevent cardiovascular disease and promote healthier lives for all South Africans.

Poor dietary habits remain a leading contributor to the rising burden of heart disease, stroke, and obesity in the country.

The campaign, themed "**Food for Health, Health for All**" aimed to empower communities to make healthier food choices and support stronger food systems. It raised awareness about nutrition, promoted balanced diets, and reduced the risk of diet-related diseases like cardiovascular disease and diabetes. The campaign encouraged diverse, nutrient-rich, and locally sourced foods, fostering community engagement and motivating individuals to take ownership of their nutrition.

The theme promoted access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food as a basic human right, highlighting its role in preventing disease and

supporting healthy development. It reflected a life-course approach, emphasising good nutrition from the first 1,000 days to old age, and enabled integrated action to address undernutrition and non-communicable diseases.

The HSFSA, in partnership with the National Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Social Development, UNICEF, ADSA, and other stakeholders, hosted a CPD-accredited webinar, ***"Food for All: Advocating for Social and Economic Justice in Food Systems,"*** featuring expert speakers Dr Brittany Kesselman, Prof HM Nkwana, and Lusaso Mtshali (UNICEF Fix My Food Advocate). The event supported broader goals of food security, equity, and sustainable national development.

World Stroke Week: 28 October - 3rd November 2025



The HSFSA commemorated World Stroke Week (WSW) from 28 October to 03 November, aligning with the World Stroke Organisation (WSO) and global stroke organisations. The week-long campaign culminated in World Stroke Day (WSD) on 29 October, emphasising the theme ***"Every Minute Counts: Let's Act Together"***. The campaign

highlighted the urgent need for early recognition and rapid response to stroke symptoms, as 1.9 million brain cells die every minute during a stroke. The HSFSA stressed the importance of acting FAST (Face, Arm, Speech, Time) to save lives, improve recovery, and reduce disability for stroke survivors. Stroke can affect people of all ages, at any time, making public education and awareness crucial for better health outcomes. The HSFSA's WSW campaign aimed to raise in-depth awareness about stroke types and the devastating effects of delayed access to health services. The foundation emphasised collective action to promote early recognition and response to stroke symptoms, ultimately reducing the impact of stroke on individuals and communities. Getting the person you suspect is having a stroke is fundamental to recovery.

The HSFSA's partnership with FAST Heroes, an award-winning, global educational initiative that empowers primary school children to recognise stroke symptoms and take timely action was one of the key activities during this period. Through HSFSA's School Health Promotion Initiative (SHPI), the FAST Heroes programme was extended to more schools, teachers, learners, and their families. The 5-week curriculum teaches children to identify stroke signs, equipping them with life-saving skills and knowledge to respond to stroke emergencies. The FAST Heroes program is a prime example of how partnerships can drive meaningful impact in the fight against stroke.

World Stroke Day: 29 October 2025



On 29 October, the HSFSA commemorated World Stroke Day with activities focused on driving public awareness of stroke symptoms and the importance of acting quickly. The HSFSA shared information on stroke risk, noting that 1 in 4 people is at risk of stroke in their lifetime. We emphasised the importance of recognising stroke signs and the #ActFAST campaign, with emphasis on the principle that time lost is brain lost. Immediate emergency care upon identification of symptoms was presented as critical for saving lives and enabling treatments that improve recovery outcomes.

The HSFSA Gauteng team commemorated World Stroke Day at Life Hospital Headquarters, highlighting the urgent need for stroke awareness and timely action. The event brought together healthcare professionals and employees to promote stroke prevention, recognition, and response. In addition, the KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape teams conducted community outreach on World Stroke Day to promote stroke awareness and prevention. The outreach focused on educating the public about recognising stroke symptoms and acting immediately. Information shared included the FAST warning signs and guidance on seeking emergency care without delay.



The HPHRAP team, together with the Nutrition Science Team hosted numerous activities across the country throughout October to highlight the urgency of acting fast during a stroke, where every minute untreated results in the loss of 1.9 million brain cells.

World Sugar Awareness Week: 17 – 23 November 2025

During World Sugar Awareness Week, 17–23 November, the HSFSa joined the global ***“Cut Through the Sweet Talk: What You See Isn’t What You Eat”*** campaign led by WASSH to raise awareness about hidden sugars and misleading food marketing. Nine in 10 children and 4 in 5 adults in South Africa (SA) consume more sugar than the recommended amount of sugar, increasing the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and tooth decay. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that free sugars make up less than 10% of total daily energy intake for adults and children, and ideally below 5% for even greater health benefits — that’s about 6 teaspoons per day for men and adolescents 14–18 years, and 5 teaspoons for women and children 5–13 years.

To help consumers make informed choices, the Foundation, in partnership with Pharma Dynamics, developed the Sugar Chart Booklet. This easy-to-use resource provides clear, evidence-based information about the impact of excessive sugar intake. It highlights that sugar is high in calories and can contribute to weight gain, increasing the risk of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

World Diabetes Day: 14 November 2025

During World Diabetes Day, 14 November, the HSFSa joined the International Diabetes Federation’s global campaign ***“Diabetes and well-being”*** to raise awareness about diabetes and its link to heart disease and

stroke. 589 million adults living with diabetes worldwide, and 2.3 million adults in SA are affected. Approximately half of adults with diabetes are undiagnosed, and three-quarters are residing in low- and middle-income countries where access to care remains limited. Uncontrolled diabetes can damage blood vessels and increase the risk of heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure and vision loss, often without early symptoms. We urged South Africans to know their numbers by checking fasting blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol, recognise key symptoms like frequent urination, thirst and fatigue, and reduce risk through a healthy weight, a balanced diet, 150 minutes of exercise weekly, and avoiding tobacco and excess alcohol.

World Obesity Day: 4 March 2026



On 4 March, the global health community observed World Obesity Day under the World Obesity Federation's theme ***"8 billion reasons to act on obesity"*** with the HSFSa aligning with the South African theme ***"Healthy Environments, Healthy Futures."*** The HSFSa partnered with the National

Department of Health to share information on obesity as a chronic, progressive medical condition affecting over 1 billion people globally and more than half of South African adults, with childhood prevalence rising fivefold since 1975 and driving early onset of type 2 diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Obesity's multiple root causes include food environment, genetics, stress, mental health and limited healthcare access, the need to shift the blame from individual to structural and systemic solutions, and the role of Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) medications alongside diet, exercise and medical supervision. The campaign also emphasised reducing stigma, improving food accessibility and affordability, regulating unhealthy food marketing, and applying WHO's three-pillar strategy of healthier environments, early risk protection and lifelong care to prevent complications and protect heart and brain health.



The HSFSa, in partnership with the National Department of Health, ADSA, Grow Great, and other stakeholders, hosted a webinar on ***“The Role of GLP-1 Agonists in Obesity Management: Efficacy, Safety, and Ongoing***

Controversies”. The discussion provided an evidence-based overview of GLP-1 receptor agonists like Ozempic and semaglutide within the South African context, and speakers clarified approved clinical indications, mechanisms of action, and appropriate patient selection. They examined the benefits, limitations, and potential risks of GLP-1 therapies and explored current controversies, including off-label use, media influence, and ethical considerations. The session contextualised GLP-1 use within South Africa’s healthcare setting and promoted informed, patient-centred decision-making under medical supervision for diabetes and obesity management.

Meeting the HSFSa’s Vision and Mission: Our Work-streams

The HSFSa delivers on its vision through a range of interconnected work-streams, namely Health Promotion and Health Risk Assessment Programme (HP&HRAP), Nutrition Science Programme, Public Relations and Communications, Business Development, Research, and Health Policy and Advocacy.

Together, these workstreams advance the Foundation’s efforts to promote cardiovascular and cerebrovascular health through advocacy, outreach, policy influence, education, research and strategic partnerships. Working collaboratively across departments, the Foundation remains responsive to evolving health priorities while contributing to environments that make healthier choices easier for all South Africans.

Health Promotion and Health Risk Assessment Programme



The HP & HRAP remains central to the Foundation's efforts to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease and stroke through prevention, awareness and early risk detection of conditions. Throughout the year, the programme delivered health risk assessments, community and workplace health talks, and public awareness initiatives aimed at improving health literacy and supporting informed decision-making. The programme also facilitated the Mended Hearts and Stroke Groups (MHSG), Employee Wellness Programme (EWP), School Health Promotion Initiative (SHPI), and contributed to the implementation of the Foundation's major health campaigns.

Through these activities, the programme continues to strengthen community engagement, promote early identification of risk factors and support healthier behaviors across diverse population groups. Selected programme activities are outlined below.

Health Risk Assessments

Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) remain a cornerstone of the Foundation's prevention and early detection efforts. By helping individuals understand health indicators such as blood pressure, blood glucose, blood cholesterol levels and Body Mass Index (BMI), HRAs provide an opportunity to identify cardiovascular risk factors before the onset of CVD.



Throughout the year, HRAs were conducted across a range of communities, workplaces and public events, creating opportunities for early intervention and referral where needed. The programme continues to play an

important role in our linkage to care model where individuals are referred to appropriate healthcare services, while reinforcing the importance of regular health screening and proactive health management.

Nutrition Science Programme



The Nutrition Science Team is one of the core pillars of HSFSa's work, ensuring all public nutritional information is evidence-based, accurate, understandable, and practical. The team provides scientifically updated content that underpins every HSFSa programme and aligns with the

organisation's strategy. Key activities include delivering health talks for SHPI, MHSG, and private sector initiatives in collaboration with the HP&HRA team. The team, with the CEO, also compiles monthly CVD research updates with peer-reviewed articles for healthcare professionals. The team responds to public and media nutrition queries from social media and the PR Team. Through this work, the Nutrition Science Team helps promote heart, brain and vascular health by turning complex science into informed, practical guidance people can actually use.

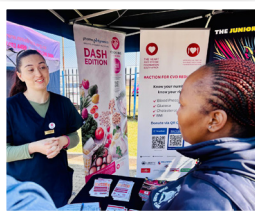
CVD research updates

The Nutrition Science Team, together with the CEO distributes the latest peer-reviewed research articles to healthcare professionals on the current thematic approach of the Foundation at any one time. The team sent out 12 editions of the CVD updates to over 2000 healthcare professionals, scientists, academics, and interest groups via email. Each update has 10 journal articles on CVD prevention, treatment, and management. Topics covered included multidisciplinary approaches to better health outcomes, strengthening stroke care pathways and post-stroke management, insulin resistance and cardiovascular risk, salt reduction and hypertension control, tobacco and vaping cessation, the

gut-brain connection between food and heart/brain health, behavioural interventions for people living with HIV, paediatric rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease, CVD risk in women and maternal health, obesity management, and the impact of family history. The CVD updates facilitate informed decision-making and best practices in patient care.

Cross-cutting Initiatives

Health Talks and Health Information Displays



Our professionals at the HSFSa aim at promoting healthy behaviours and empowering all South Africans with knowledge to live a healthier and better life by enriching them with evidence-based educational information. The team conducted numerous health talks targeting the community,

various schools, tertiary institutions, clinics, hospitals, shopping complexes, various non-government organisations, and corporate sectors with a display of information booklets and pamphlets.

Employee Wellness Programme

Throughout the year, the Foundation's Employee Wellness Programme (EWP) supported healthier and more resilient workplaces across South Africa. Through health talks, health risk assessments, counselling and referral services, employees were encouraged to better understand their health and make informed health choices. This initiative is conducted across the private and public sectors.

As the workplace health needs continue to evolve, the Foundation has strengthened and refined the programme to remain relevant, evidence-based and responsive to the challenges facing today's workforce. By promoting prevention, early detection and overall well-being, the EWP

helped employees take positive steps towards improving their health both at work and at home.

Mended Hearts and Stroke Group (MHSKG) Meetings



The Mended Hearts and Stroke Group meetings (MHSKGs) primarily provide education and practical information to individuals affected by cardiovascular disease and stroke, as well as their families and caregivers. Monthly meetings feature health talks by healthcare professionals and allied service providers, covering cardiovascular health, risk-factor prevention, treatment and disease management. Health Risk Assessments are also conducted by the Foundation on request.

Alongside education, the meetings provide an opportunity for participants to connect with others with similar experiences, share challenges and offer mutual encouragement. MHSKG meetings are held in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban.

School Health Promotion Initiative (SHPI)



The School Health Promotion Initiative (SHPI), launched in 2017 under the leadership of the Foundation's CEO, Prof Pamela Naidoo, remains one of the Foundation's flagship programmes. Using a whole-of-the-school approach, the programme aims to raise awareness among young South Africans about the importance of adopting healthy behaviours, while encouraging school staff to know

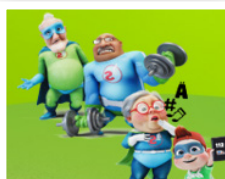


their health status through Health Risk Assessments and referral for further care where needed.

Through engaging health education sessions, interactive activities and visits from the Foundation's beloved mascot, Hearty, learners are empowered with practical knowledge about healthy living. Key focus areas include healthy eating, regular physical activity, tobacco and vape prevention, and understanding the importance of maintaining a healthy heart and brain.

During the reporting period, the Foundation strengthened the programme through a partnership with Cart Agency and the implementation of the ***Live Hearty, Keep the Beat Mzansi*** campaign. Initially rolled out in Gauteng, the campaign promotes five key pillars: ***Eat Hearty, Play Hearty, Learn Hearty, Love Hearty and Live Hearty***. Through interactive lessons and activities, learners are encouraged to make informed choices that support their health, wellbeing and academic success, while fostering kindness, social connectedness and a culture of wellness within their schools and communities. By extending health messages beyond the classroom and into homes and neighbourhoods, the programme continues to create a positive ripple effect, helping to build healthier, more informed and resilient communities.

FAST Heroes



The HSFSA is the primary partner of Boehringer Ingelheim and IQVIA in implementing the FAST Heroes initiative, an award-winning global educational programme aimed at increasing awareness of stroke symptoms and the need for urgent medical intervention. The programme uses innovative, child-centred learning to empower children aged 5 to 9 years to recognise the signs of stroke and share this knowledge with their families, particularly grandparents who are at greater risk. By encouraging intergenerational

learning, FAST Heroes strengthens community awareness of stroke, promotes early recognition and timely action, and ultimately contributes to improved health outcomes through faster access to care.

Sporting Events



The Gauteng team participated in a series of high-profile sporting, wellness, and community events to promote heart and brain health, and encourage healthy behaviours. As part of the annual Valentine's Month fundraising

campaign, the team participated at two major mass participation events: the Legend Township Marathon in Eldorado Park, hosted by Legends Barbers, with approximately 8 000 runners, and the WITS University Varsity Kudus Marathon, with 5 000 participants. Additional events include the Liberty Fun Run at The Hills, which had 80 participants and we provided an opportunity for on-site health risk assessments. Participants also received education on CVD risks and prevention, with counselling and referrals provided for those with concerning results.

The Gauteng team also participated in the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) sports festivals, including both the Regional A Sports Festival and the City-Wide Sports Festival. The Regional A Sports Festival brought together 250 children, and the City-Wide Sports Festival hosted 1,000 participants aged 12-15 from all seven regions across the City for community-based games and mass participation activities in sports such as soccer, netball, hockey, basketball, swimming, and more. In support of the CoJ's goal to promote sustainable, healthy behaviours, the team engaged athletes on healthy eating habits, balanced nutrition, and the role of physical activity and positive recreation in overall wellness.



The Cape Town HSFA team participated in the annual Cape Town Cycle Tour Expo welcoming as many as 35,000 cyclists taking part in the race and their supporters. The team provided evidence-based education on CVD

prevention, healthy behaviours, and the importance of regular health screening. The team provided much needed health risk assessments to a large number of attendees over the course of 3 days, in partnership with the Liberty: The Standard Bank Group. The event provided an opportunity to promote heart and brain health while increasing the Foundation's visibility among a large and health-conscious audience.

ACTIVITIES	WESTERN & EASTERN CAPE	KWAZULU NATAL	GAUTENG	NATIONAL
<i>Health Risk Assessments (Screenings)</i>	26 Events (T=932)	50 Events (T=1294)	2 Events (T=49)	78 Events (T=2275)
<i>Health talks</i>	31 Events (T=1077)	72 Events (T=13073)	42 Events (T=11325)	145 Events (T=25475)
<i>Health Information Tables</i>	69 Events (T=4676)	95 Events (T=14125)	30 Events (T=2068)	194 Events (T=20869)
<i>Mended Hearts and Stroke Group Meetings</i>	12 Events (T=286)	30 Events (T=750)	4 Events (T= 181)	46 Events (T=1217)
<i>School Health Promotion Initiative (Learners Reached)</i>	6 Schools (T=1474)	15 Schools (T=9625)	14 Schools (T= 9476)	35 Schools (T=20575)

Table of number of individuals reached through programmatic activities in the provinces of Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng

- The Total (T) number of attendees reached are in brackets
- All activities include community engagements, private sector engagements, stakeholder engagements, partner malls, etc.

Public Relations, Communications and Marketing



During the 2025 - 2026 period, the HSFA's Public Relations, Communications and Marketing department witnessed a significant year-on-year growth in promoting the Foundation and its work streams to local and international audiences. The Foundation regularly received invitations to participate in media interviews where we discussed various health topics. The invitation usually followed press releases associated with key campaigns. Publicity

and campaigns were consistent throughout the year, significantly maintaining and enhancing the brand as a reliable information hub.

Through these efforts, the vital link between our various publics and programmes was strengthened. Moreover, the department achieved significant success in increasing the reach and exposure of the HSFSa, translating into 1 017 broadcast interviews and news articles, ranging from community, regional, national and international media (print, broadcast and web-based media), such as eNCA, Morning Live, Newzroom Afrika, 5 FM, Media 24, Independent Newspapers, IOL, Heita Magazine, Radio 2000, SA FM, Channel Africa, Motswedding FM, Cape Talk, Radio 702, Good News Community Radio, O FM, Wild Coast Radio, Eldos FM, Inanda FM, Disa FM and many others to ensure that the organization and its partners are able to share vital health information both locally and internationally.

Social Media, Quarterly E-Newsletters and Website

Our social media pages, website and quarterly e-newsletters have played a significant role in knowledge dissemination. These platforms were abuzz with content consisting of key health awareness days observed by the Foundation which is aligned with the NDOH in SA, the WHO, WSO, WHF, Protect Our Next, WOF, WASHH, SANCD Alliance and other affiliated 30 health organizations, competitions and giveaways, health tips, recipes and teasers, while also expanding on each health day's message via articles, posters, leaflets and audio-visual material, reaching thousands of readers and followers within South Africa and beyond. This engagement has increased three-fold from the previous year.

 Facebook followers increased by 10.3% from 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026:	
1 April 2025	31 March 2026
11 439	12 620
1 April 2024	31 March 2025
10 984	11 439





 <i>X followers increased by 2.4% from 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026</i>	
<i>1 April 2025</i>	<i>31 March 2026</i>
4 664	4 775
<i>01 April 2023</i>	<i>31 March 2024</i>
4 382	4 664

Annual media coverage at a glance: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

During this period, the HSFSA’s health literacy messaging reached, cumulatively, 862 591 498 readers, listeners and viewers in South Africa and beyond, resulting in a 2.1% increase.

<i>Newspaper and Magazines Articles</i>	<i>Online Articles</i>	<i>Radio and TV Interviews</i>	<i>Total</i>
249	363	405	1 017

Partnerships

Mail and Guardian

The Mail & Guardian partnership, one of South Africa’s premier media outlets, played a key role in advertising major health awareness campaigns that the Foundation promulgated during the reporting period and this impact was significant in raising health awareness.

Bathic Publishers and Trade Intelligence

Bathic Publishers played a key role in driving advertising and awareness around the Heart Mark Programme - much exposure was retrieved and secured in driving awareness parameters around the programme as well as applications to the Programme. Additional advertising support was provided and delivered via the Trade Intelligence group with inserts placed in the Trade Tatler.

Exhibitions

The Good Life Show

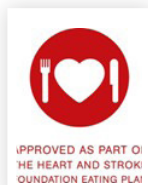
The three-day *“best food, drink and conscious living”* event took place in Cape Town from 30 May – 1 June at the Cape Town International Convention Centre and 30 May - 1 June at the prestigious Kayalami International Convention Centre. Attendees had the opportunity to explore a wide range of healthier food and drink options, wellness products, clean beauty, natural and organic goods, plant-based innovations, and eco-friendly living solutions. The event featured interactive masterclasses, pop-up eateries, and live cooking demonstrations by well-known chefs and wellness experts, including Jameson Stocks, Dr. Aris LaTham, Jenny Morris (Celebrity Chef and a proud HSFS Brand Champion), and others. The Foundation’s Cape Town Heart Mark administrator and other team members showcased the iconic Heart Mark Endorsement Programme during the show, accentuating the value of making healthier food choices easier.



The HSFS team at the Good Life Show to promote a healthier lifestyle and showcase the Heart Mark Endorsement Programme.

Income Streams: Endorsements, Donations and Fundraising

Heart Mark: Food Endorsement Programme



The Heart Mark food endorsement programme is a key initiative by the HSFSa aimed at reducing preventable heart disease and stroke-related deaths in South Africa by promoting healthier food choices. The program, approved by the National Department of Health and based on the latest nutritional research, South African Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, and international best practices, identifies foods that are lower in salt, sugar, and saturated fats, and higher in fibre. By providing a trusted symbol of heart-brain healthy foods, the Heart Mark program empowers consumers to make informed choices, supporting a healthier diet and reducing the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease. The program operates within the food regulatory framework, ensuring credibility and is supported by various food companies.

There are a total of 54 Heart Mark fee-paying clients as well as 314 different products endorsed by the Heart Mark Programme. Food companies earn the Heart Mark endorsement following a strict process that includes South African laboratory tests for verification of the product's ingredients and nutrients. If the product does not meet the HSFSa's Criteria, this will be discussed with the manufacturer/client, and the product may be reformulated or otherwise declined for Endorsement. The Heart Mark can be used alongside healthy eating guidelines.

Mobile Clinic



The Foundation's mobile clinic continues to play an important role in extending health promotion, screening and prevention services to communities,

particularly those with limited access to healthcare services. Operating predominantly in the Western Cape, the mobile clinic supports community outreach activities and provides a convenient platform for health education, health risk assessments and early detection initiatives.

During the reporting period, the Foundation undertook a strategic branding initiative to enhance the visibility and sustainability of the mobile clinic. Opportunities were created for corporate partners, donors and Heart Mark partners to utilise designated branding space on the clinic, creating a platform for shared visibility while generating an additional revenue stream to support the Foundation's work. This initiative forms part of the Foundation's broader efforts to strengthen sustainability, foster partnerships and maximise the impact of community-based health services.

Campaign sponsors, Donors and Fundraising

A special expression of gratitude to all our stakeholders, sponsors and donors that contributed to our fundraising initiatives. Donations are broken down into either cash or in-kind donation format. The following are a few of our donor partners in the media and other relevant institutions: Highbury Media, Good News Community Radio, Disa FM, Eldos FM, Wild Coast Radio, Radio Namakwaland, the Mail & Guardian, Bathic Publishers and HEITA Magazine. In addition, sincere gratitude goes to Heart Mark holders who provided additional product donations during significant campaign periods: Dischem (Pty) Ltd, Shoprite Checkers (Pty) Ltd, B-well, Westfalia Fruit Products (Pty) Ltd. Donations and Sponsors in the form of the Willowton Group (Diamond Sponsor), Lucky Star (Gold Sponsor), Pharma Dynamics, Unilever, the Liberty Group, Dischem and Boehringer Ingelheim also made generous contributions in the delivery the Foundation's sustainability requirements as well as operating expenditure. A special mention goes out to the families and individuals who donate to us directly via bequests and / or trusts.



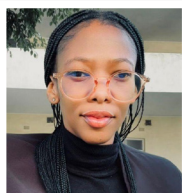
Testimonials



Angelique Theron

"Losing 73 kg has given me my health, confidence and energy back. Today I enjoy jogging and running—something I never imagined possible five years ago."

Five years ago, Angelique made the life-changing decision to undergo gastric bypass surgery after years of struggling with obesity and related health complications. At the time, she weighed 136 kg, had a BMI of 55, and was living with high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and sleep apnoea. Everyday activities, including climbing stairs, were exhausting, despite numerous attempts to lose weight through various diets and programmes. Since her surgery, Angelique has lost 73 kg and no longer requires blood pressure medication. Her diabetes and sleep apnoea have resolved, and she has regained her energy, confidence, and quality of life. Today, she enjoys an active lifestyle, including jogging and running, demonstrating the life-changing benefits of improved health.



Lumka Mau-mau

In 2023, my life changed without warning. What began as an ordinary day ended with me collapsing after dinner with a friend. Two days later, I woke up in hospital to learn that I had suffered a massive stroke that had left the right side of my body completely paralysed. At first, I believed everything would soon return to normal, but it was not until I arrived home that the reality truly set in. I had gone from living an independent life, driving, working, and caring for myself to needing help with every basic task. Losing my independence was one of the most difficult parts of my journey, and each morning brought the painful reminder that my body was no longer responding the way it once had.

Instead of allowing my circumstances to define me, I chose to fight

for my life. Through faith in God, determination, countless hours of therapy, and relentless hard work, I committed myself to rebuilding what I had lost. I spoke to my body every day, encouraging my fingers to move, celebrating every small milestone, and believing that recovery was possible even when progress felt slow. Today, I am walking, I have returned to work, and although my recovery journey continues, I am living proof that hope, resilience, and perseverance can carry us through life's most difficult moments. My story is not simply about surviving a stroke, it is about choosing, every single day, to rise again.

Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa's Champions



Ronald Abvajee

Ronald is an entrepreneur, international keynote speaker, a qualified physiologist with a degree in Physical Education and Human Movement Sciences, and he is also a qualified 5th-degree black belt in karate. As a renowned radio and television wellbeing expert, Ronald wins the hearts and minds of audiences through his practical approach to overcoming challenges and the honest belief that wellbeing is not a lofty aspiration but something that every person deserves and can attain with the right information and tools to fix what might be perceived as broken or breaking. He has won numerous awards in recognition of the impact he makes both within his own company and those he works with.



Jenni Gault

Jenni Gault, a jewellery designer, was an exceptionally fit 41-year-old when in 2007 she had a series of Heart Attacks and subsequently a Stroke. Over the next four years, she had 18 TIA's. Unfortunately, her medical headaches didn't end there, and in 2010 and 2012, she had both left and right total hip replacements. But that's not all, in 2018, she was diagnosed with Breast Cancer, which led to a double mastectomy.



She is very excited to have received Remission Status. However, she chose to never be a victim. She has led a very exciting life and traveled and shown in incredible places. A highlight for her was in 2017 when she was awarded the accolade ***“The World’s Most Talented Fashion Jewellery Designer”*** by Hermann Winkler, Swarovski.

Research Grants

In 2024, the HSFSA awarded its second research grant to two successful recipients: Dr C. Kotze of the University of the Western Cape and Prof J.D. Pillay of the Durban University of Technology.

Dr Kotze’s project, ***“Unveiling the Interplay between Lifestyle Factors and Biomarkers of Cardiovascular Disease Risk,”*** and Prof Pillay’s project, ***“Development, Validation, and Pilot Testing of a Bio-Behavioural Mass Strategy for Hypertension Prevention in South Africa”*** are both making good progress. The Foundation is encouraged by the progress of the grantees and look forward to sharing the research outcomes once the projects are completed. The CEO, Prof Pamela Naidoo, expresses her sincere appreciation to the Research Advisory Committee for its continued guidance, expertise and commitment to supporting the Foundation’s research agenda.

Research and Publications

1. Cohen, R., Sheftel, J., ...**Dhansay, M. A.** et al. (2025). Metabolomics profiling of hypervitaminosis A in South African preschoolers is characterised by modified serum lysophospholipids and oxylipins. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 133(11), 1385–1394.
2. Fungo, R., Zotor, F., ...**Dhansay, M. A.** et al. (2026). The EAT–Lancet Commission: Issues and responses. *The Lancet*, 407(10530), 758–759.
3. Harerimana, A., ... **Mchunu, G.** (2026). Mapping the storm: A scoping review of diabetic emergencies in Africa. *Frontiers in Clinical Diabetes and Healthcare*, 7, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcdhc.2026.1822436>
4. Harerimana, A., Wicking, K., ...**Mchunu, G.** (2025). Adoption of electronic health records by nurses in Africa: A scoping review. *DIGITAL HEALTH*, 11, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076251357401>
5. Joseph, P., Avezum, Á., ... **Puoane, T.**, et al. (2025). Secondary prevention medications in 17 countries grouped by income level (PURE): A prospective cohort study. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 85(5), 436–447. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39909677/>
6. Nelson M., Gruper, M., ... **Naidoo, P.** (2025). The Importance of Advocacy in Advancing Stroke Care: The Global Stroke Action Coalition. *International Journal of Stroke*. DOI: 10.1177/17474930261428056
7. Patel, S., Robsky, K. O., ... **Mchunu, G.**, et al. (2026). Promise to practice: Reimagining artificial intelligence for equitable global health impact. *Annals of Global Health*, 92(1), 51. <https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.5268>
8. Pieterse, E., **Pretorius, B.**, & Schönfeldt, H. C. (2025). Comparative proximate analysis and nutrient labelling compliance of cow milk and plant-based milk alternatives: Implications for consumer choice and food policy. *Food Chemistry*, 502, 147467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2025.147467>
9. Semenekane, N. M., **Pretorius, B.**, & Schönfeldt, H. C. (2026). Optimal consumption of traditional green leafy vegetables among young children aged 2–6 years in South Africa: A scoping review. *Discover Public Health*, 23, 27. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12982-025-01333-8>



Staff



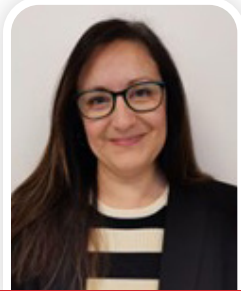
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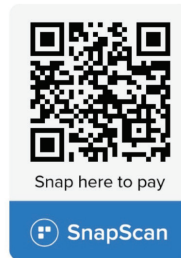
Financial Statements



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