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# Comment Komentaar

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by George Davie

## The Federal Council

**R**ecently the Federal Council of the Medical Association of South Africa held its annual three-day meeting.

During this marathon session, five hundred pages of agenda were worked through. Perhaps 'combed' through is more apt, if one could realise with what fervour most of the items were discussed by the sixty odd Federal councillors representing every type of practice in our country. Nit-picking was limited, however, by the ever-vigilant Chairman, Professor de Klerk.

Do you have any idea what far-reaching decisions were taken on your behalf and how binding they will be? In order to be sure, you should request a report-back from the representative from your area.

It is important to know what is happening but even more essential that your Federal councillor is aware of the opinions of the people he is purporting to represent. It is very easy for a councillor to eventually lose a general perspective and think

only from the vantage point of his own speciality or other subset.

Do you know that your right of review or appeal in connection with decisions of Medical Council was again hotly debated?

I am sure most of us are not even aware of the tremendous difference involved in these two processes if one wishes to dispute a ruling. Your Federal Councillor will be able to give you some idea of what is involved.

Are you aware of the mushrooming of State clinics around you? Have you noticed the appearance of State controlled Birth Control Clinics, Well Baby Clinics, Genetic Clinics, Hypertension Clinics, Diabetes Clinics and Mental Health Clinics?

Have you heard about the Health Foundation of Southern Africa? Probably not but this newly formed, multi-representative body may be the only hope for the rational approach to comprehensive medical care in our country. It feels strongly

that the proper involvement of the private sector is the correct way to prevent the chaos that looms as our large black population begins to demand individualised medical attention. Your Federal Councillor will tell you the details.

Has your scientific approach to the treatment of patients been threatened by the recent Medical Council rulings with regard to laboratory tests undertaken by non-pathologists? Then you too, had a champion at the meeting who painstakingly re-opened the whole issue.

Once again GPs and Pathologists will sit at a round table and discuss the possibilities of compromise, so that you may enjoy the right to undertake tests well within your competence for the benefit of the informed patient who demands Twentieth Century Medicine.

These topics are only a smattering of the many important issues debated. Your Federal Councillor has a lot of reporting to do. □