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Contents

- Welcome to SADA: Carla Güldenpfennig, Legal and Corporate Governance Advisor
- Welcome to SADA: Sephule Anastacia Makunyane, Membership Experience Consultant
- Farewell from SADA: Lindiwe Sekhoahla, Membership Experience Consultant
- What the End of US HIV Funding Could Mean for Dentistry in South Africa
- Can South Africa Become a Leading Dental Tourism Destination?
- Ebola in Central Africa: What South African Dentists Should Know
- Vacancy SADA Associate: Clinical Support Services
- Survey participation call:
 - SADA / DENTASA Managed Care Discontent Survey
 - SADA Amalgam Use & Procurement Survey
 - SADA Community Service Dentist Survey
 - Shaping the Future of SADA CPD and Congress Survey
- Upcoming Events

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WELCOME TO SADA: CARLA GÜLDENPFENNIG, LEGAL AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISOR

The South African Dental Association is pleased to welcome Carla Güldenpfennig as our Legal and Corporate Governance Advisor, who joined SADA on 6 July 2026.

Carla is an admitted attorney with a strong background in medico-legal practice, corporate governance and healthcare law. She previously served as a Case Manager at the Medical Protection Society (MPS), where she provided legal and ethical advice to healthcare practitioners, managed complex medico-legal matters, assisted with HPCSA complaints, and worked closely with legal and clinical professionals to protect members' interests.

Prior to joining MPS, Carla completed her articles at Adele van der Walt Inc., specialising in High Court medical negligence and personal injury litigation, where she gained extensive experience in legal research, drafting, litigation support and client advisory services.

Immediately before joining SADA, Carla also worked with Moosa Duke Solicitors, a United Kingdom-based law firm, as an independent Associate Consultant. In this role, she worked alongside solicitors on case management, legal research, document drafting and review, legal correspondence, and the administration of legal matters.

Carla holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and a Bachelor of Arts in Law with Industrial Psychology from North-West University and brings a combination of legal expertise, governance knowledge and practical experience within the healthcare sector.

We are delighted to welcome Carla to the SADA team and look forward to the valuable contribution she will make in strengthening the Association's legal, governance and member advisory services.

WELCOME TO SADA: SEPHULE ANASTACIA MAKUNYANE, MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE CONSULTANT

The South African Dental Association is delighted to welcome Sephule Anastacia Makunyane as our Membership Experience Consultant, who joined SADA on 10 July 2026.

Sephule brings a strong background in customer service, membership engagement, business development and financial administration. Prior to joining SADA, she served as a B2B Sales Consultant at Pepkor Lifestyle, where she developed and implemented member engagement strategies, built lasting client relationships, resolved member enquiries, analysed feedback to improve service delivery, and collaborated across teams to enhance the overall customer experience.

Most recently, Sephule worked as an Intermediate Debtors Controller at ISER (Pty) Ltd, trading as Expert, where she was responsible for debtor account management, customer account reconciliation, collections, reporting and maintaining strong client relationships while ensuring efficient financial administration.

She holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Financial Sciences from the University of Pretoria and combines strong analytical, organisational and communication skills with a genuine passion for delivering excellent service and building meaningful relationships.

As Membership Experience Consultant, Sephule will play an important role in strengthening member engagement, enhancing the quality of our member services and ensuring that every interaction with SADA reflects our commitment to excellence. We are pleased to welcome Sephule to the SADA team and look forward to the positive contribution she will make in supporting our members and advancing the Association's strategic objectives.

FAREWELL FROM SADA: TO LINDIWE SEKHOAHLA, MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCE CONSULTANT

SADA bids farewell to Lindiwe Sekhoahla, whom many members would have come to know through her role as Membership Experience Consultant since joining the Association in July 2024. As her contract concluded on 30 June 2026, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for her dedication, professionalism, and valuable contribution during her time with SADA.

Lindiwe consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to serving our members and supporting her colleagues. Her positive attitude, reliability, and willingness to go the extra mile made her a valued member of the SADA team, and her contribution is sincerely appreciated.

On behalf of the SADAríte team, we thank Lindiwe for her service and wish her every success in her future endeavours. We trust that the experience and relationships she has built at SADA will continue to support her as she embarks on the next stage of her career.

WHAT THE END OF US HIV FUNDING COULD MEAN FOR DENTISTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The announcement that the United States will phase out its HIV funding support to South Africa over the coming months has sparked significant discussion across the healthcare sector. While much of the focus has been on hospitals and HIV treatment programmes, the decision also has important implications for oral healthcare professionals.

South Africa has one of the world's largest populations of people living with HIV. Advances in antiretroviral therapy have transformed HIV into a manageable chronic condition for millions of people, enabling patients to live longer, healthier lives while continuing to access routine healthcare, including dental treatment.

Although the South African Government has indicated that it has long been preparing for greater financial self-reliance and that the supply of antiretroviral medicines will continue, the transition away from international funding may place additional pressure on the broader public health system.

Why this matters to dentists

Oral health forms an essential part of comprehensive HIV care. Dentists are often the first healthcare professionals to detect oral manifestations that may indicate immune suppression, treatment complications, or other systemic conditions.

Should public health services become more constrained, dental practitioners may encounter:

- More patients presenting with advanced oral disease due to delayed access to care.
- Increased referrals between the public and private sectors.
- Greater demand for preventive and community-based oral healthcare.
- A growing need for multidisciplinary collaboration with medical practitioners.

For many vulnerable patients, maintaining regular dental care will remain critical to preserving quality of life.

Prevention remains the best investment

Periods of healthcare transition reinforce the importance of prevention. Good oral hygiene, routine dental examinations and early intervention reduce the need for complex treatment and contribute to better overall health outcomes.

Dental practices also play an important educational role by encouraging patients to:

- Attend regular dental check-ups.
- Maintain excellent oral hygiene.
- Seek prompt assessment of persistent oral lesions or infections.
- Continue adhering to prescribed medical treatment and follow-up care.

Looking ahead

South Africa has built one of the world's largest HIV treatment programmes and has developed considerable local expertise over the past two decades. While changes in international funding present challenges, they also provide an opportunity to strengthen sustainable, locally driven healthcare systems.

For the dental profession, the focus remains unchanged: delivering safe, evidence-based, patient-centred care while supporting the broader health of our communities.

As healthcare evolves, dentists will continue to play a vital role in identifying disease early, promoting prevention, and ensuring that oral health remains an integral part of overall wellbeing.

CAN SOUTH AFRICA BECOME A LEADING DENTAL TOURISM DESTINATION?

Or Should It?

Across the world, dental tourism has grown into a multi-billion-dollar industry. Every year, thousands of patients travel internationally to receive dental treatment, combining high-quality care with lower treatment costs and the opportunity for a holiday. Countries such as Turkey, Hungary, Thailand, Mexico and India have deliberately positioned themselves as global dental destinations, attracting patients from Europe, North America and the Middle East.

The question is whether South Africa should be part of this conversation.

A Global Opportunity

Dental tourism is no longer driven by affordability alone. International patients increasingly seek a combination of:

- Highly qualified clinicians.
- Modern digital dentistry.
- Internationally recognised infection control standards.
- Short waiting times.
- A memorable travel experience.

Many countries have recognised dentistry as an important contributor to their health economy, investing in international marketing, accreditation systems, streamlined visa processes and partnerships between healthcare providers and the tourism industry.

Turkey, for example, now treats hundreds of thousands of international dental patients annually, generating significant foreign income while supporting employment across healthcare, hospitality and tourism sectors.

South Africa Already Has Many Advantages

South Africa possesses several strengths that make it an attractive destination for international dental care.

Our dentists enjoy an excellent reputation, with many trained to internationally recognised standards and regularly participating in continuing professional development. South African specialists are respected globally, while many graduates have gone on to successful careers across Europe, Australasia, the Middle East and North America.

The country also offers:

- Modern private dental practices equipped with advanced digital technology.
- English-speaking clinicians and support staff.
- Competitive treatment costs compared with many developed countries.
- Exceptional tourism experiences, from Cape Town and the Garden Route to the Kruger National Park and the Drakensberg.
- World-class hospitality and accommodation.

For many overseas patients, South Africa already represents excellent value without compromising clinical quality.

Why Isn't South Africa Better Known?

Despite these strengths, South Africa has not emerged as a recognised global dental tourism destination.

Several factors may contribute:

- Limited international marketing of South African dentistry.
- Few coordinated partnerships between the dental profession, tourism operators and government.
- Perceptions around safety and security.
- Long-haul travel times for patients from Europe and North America.
- Limited national branding around healthcare tourism.

Unlike countries that have invested heavily in promoting dental tourism, South Africa's dental sector has largely remained focused on serving domestic patients.

Could Dental Tourism Benefit the Profession?

If managed responsibly, expanding dental tourism could bring several benefits.

International patients contribute foreign revenue directly to practices while also supporting airlines, hotels, restaurants, transport services and local attractions. Increased demand may encourage investment in advanced technologies such as digital workflows, CAD/CAM systems, 3D imaging and artificial intelligence, which ultimately benefits South African patients as well.

A stronger international profile could also enhance South Africa's reputation as a centre of clinical excellence, attracting conferences, research collaborations and specialist training opportunities.

But There Are Important Questions

Growth should never come at the expense of local access to care.

South Africa continues to face significant oral health inequalities, with many communities experiencing limited access to basic dental services. Any strategy to encourage international patients must be balanced against the profession's responsibility to improve oral healthcare for South Africans.

Other important considerations include:

- Appropriate regulation and quality assurance.
- Transparent pricing and ethical marketing.
- Professional indemnity across international borders.
- Continuity of care once overseas patients return home.
- Patient safety and appropriate follow-up.

Dental tourism should enhance the profession—not create incentives that compromise ethical practice.

A Strategic Conversation for South Africa

Medical tourism already contributes meaningfully to South Africa's private healthcare sector. Dentistry could form part of this broader opportunity, but success would require collaboration between professional associations, regulators, tourism authorities and government.

Questions worth exploring include:

- Should South Africa develop a national dental tourism strategy?
- What role could organised dentistry play in promoting quality standards?
- How can South Africa market its clinical excellence while maintaining ethical practice?
- What infrastructure, policy or visa reforms would support international patients?
- How can any economic benefits also strengthen access to oral healthcare for South Africans?

The Conversation Starts Here

South African dentistry has much to offer the world. Our clinicians are highly skilled, our private practices compare favourably with many international counterparts, and our country remains one of the world's most sought-after travel destinations.

Perhaps the question is no longer whether South Africa *could* become a recognised dental tourism destination.

The more important question is whether we *should*—and, if so, how we can develop a model that strengthens the profession, benefits the economy and remains firmly committed to serving the oral health needs of all South Africans.

What do you think? SADA CEO invites members to share their views. Should South Africa actively position itself as a destination for dental tourism, or should the profession focus its efforts elsewhere? The conversation is one worth having.

EBOLA IN CENTRAL AFRICA: WHAT SOUTH AFRICAN DENTISTS SHOULD KNOW

The current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to draw the attention of global public health authorities. While South Africa has not recorded any cases linked to the current outbreak, infectious disease experts caution that increased travel within Africa means continued vigilance is essential.

South Africa's healthcare system has well-established surveillance and infection prevention protocols, and public health authorities continue to monitor developments across the region.

Why oral healthcare professionals should pay attention

Although dentists are unlikely to encounter Ebola in routine practice, every dental professional should remain familiar with standard infection prevention and control measures. These principles provide protection not only against rare diseases such as Ebola, but also against more common infectious conditions encountered in daily clinical practice.

Patients with early Ebola infection typically present with non-specific symptoms such as fever, fatigue, muscle aches and headache—symptoms that resemble many other viral illnesses. The disease is not transmitted through casual contact but through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person, particularly once symptoms have developed.

The importance of standard precautions

The current outbreak serves as a reminder that rigorous infection control remains the cornerstone of safe dental practice. Every dental team should consistently adhere to:

- Standard precautions for all patients.
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Effective hand hygiene before and after patient contact.
- Proper cleaning, sterilisation and disinfection of instruments and clinical environments.
- Safe management of sharps and clinical waste.

These measures are designed to protect both patients and healthcare workers from a wide range of infectious diseases.

Stay alert—not alarmed

Experts emphasise that there is currently no reason for panic in South Africa. However, healthcare professionals should remain aware of international outbreaks and obtain an appropriate medical and travel history from patients presenting with unexplained febrile illness, particularly if they have recently travelled to affected regions.

Any patient with symptoms consistent with a serious infectious disease and a relevant travel history should be referred promptly through established medical channels rather than being managed in the dental practice.

Oral healthcare remains part of public health

Recent international outbreaks—from COVID-19 to Mpox and now Ebola—highlight the important role that dental professionals play within the broader healthcare system. Dentists are often among the first clinicians to assess patients and therefore contribute to the early recognition of potentially serious illnesses while maintaining safe clinical environments.

SADA encourages members to remain informed through official public health updates and to continue applying evidence-based infection prevention practices every day. Consistent adherence to these standards remains the best defence against both emerging and established infectious diseases.

VACANCY SADA ASSOCIATE: CLINICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Associate Clinical Support Services provides strategic, operational, and professional support to the Head: Clinical Support Services in delivering SADA's clinical advisory, coding, accreditation, medical scheme, and member support functions. The role supports stakeholder engagement, clinical guidance, and departmental continuity while contributing to SADA's position as a leading authority in South Africa's oral healthcare sector.

Applications are invited for the abovementioned role, which has become available within the South African Dental Association.

Please submit your application with an abridged (no more than 3 pages) curriculum vitae to jobs@sada.co.za by no later than 31 July 2026.

(If you have previously applied there is no need to re-submit an application)

[Job Description Document](#)

SURVEY PARTICIPATION CALL

SADA / DENTASA Managed Care Discontent

SADA and DENTASA encourage your participation in this joint survey to strengthen collaboration and understanding between private dental practitioners and dental technicians. Your

SADA Amalgam Use & Procurement

SADA invites you to participate in this important survey on amalgam use and procurement within the profession. Your feedback will provide valuable insights into current practices, challenges, and future trends, helping SADA engage

feedback is valuable in helping identify opportunities, challenges, and priorities that will support the continued growth and sustainability of the profession.

more effectively on matters affecting dental practitioners and the broader oral healthcare sector.

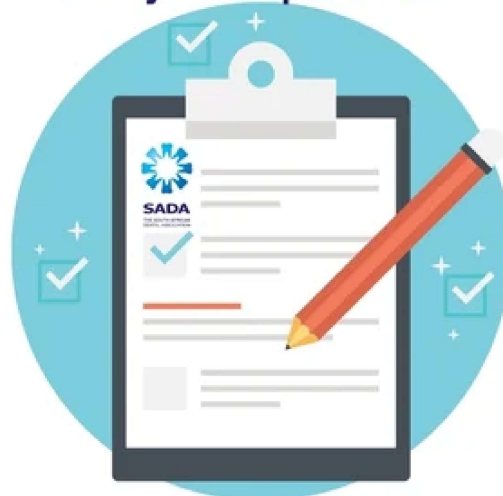
Survey Participation Call



**SADA/DENTASA
Managed Care Discontent Survey
Survey 2026**

SADA Community Service Dentist
SADA invites Community Service Dentists to participate in this survey to better understand the experiences, challenges, and support needs of young professionals entering the profession. Your participation will help inform future advocacy, engagement, and initiatives to support Community Service Dentists and strengthen the future of oral healthcare in South Africa.

Survey Participation Call



**SADA Amalgam Use & Procurement
Survey 2026**

Shaping the Future of SADA CPD and Congress

Your input is important in helping SADA shape the future of Continuing Professional Development and Congress offerings for the profession. By participating in this survey, you will help us understand members' needs, preferences, and expectations, ensuring that future initiatives remain relevant, valuable, and impactful.

Survey Participation Call



**SADA Community Service Dentist
Survey 2026**

Survey Participation Call



**Shaping the future of SADA CPD
and Congress
Survey 2026**

Yours in Oral Health

KC Makhubele

Chief Executive Officer

UPCOMING EVENTS

21
Aug

2026 SADA Dental & Oral Health Congress and Exhibition

22
Aug

SADA AWARDS & GRADUAND GALA DINNER 22 August 2026

Will we see you in Cape Town?



DENTAL & ORAL HEALTH CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

21 – 23 AUGUST 2026

CAPE TOWN
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