



5 July 2023

SASA Advisory: Reporting of Impaired Practitioners

Dear SASA Members,

As the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA) continues to advocate for excellence in our field, we believe it is crucial to address a growing concern within the global medical community, particularly in South Africa—the issue of impairment among clinicians.

Impairment, whether due to substance abuse, mental health issues, or other factors, poses significant risks to patient safety and the integrity of our profession. The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has rightly placed the burden of reporting impairment and unprofessional conduct on all registered clinicians. However, we recognise that the thresholds for reporting can be complex and not easily understood.

SASA wants to ensure that its members are equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources to navigate this challenging landscape. We strongly encourage all members to engage with their indemnifiers regarding the reporting of a possible impaired practitioner. Your indemnifier can provide valuable advice on whether the threshold for reporting has been met and assist you in protecting yourself against further liability.

By seeking guidance from your indemnifier, you can make informed decisions while balancing the responsibility to patient safety and your professional well-being. Remember, reporting a colleague's impairment is not an easy task, but it is essential for the betterment of our profession and the safeguarding of those under our care.



SASA remains committed to supporting its members through these complex issues. We are actively working to collaborate with the HPCSA to streamline reporting processes and ensure greater clarity in the thresholds. We firmly believe that a transparent and supportive system will encourage more healthcare professionals to come forward and report concerns without fear of undue consequences.

Please remember that the strength of our profession lies in unity and mutual support. Together, we can address the problem of impairment and promote a culture of patient safety and accountability.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to excellence in anaesthesiology. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We value your input and strive to serve you better.

Please also feel free to contact the SASA RBU with any issues related to impairment and we will be happy to assist where we can.

SASA Regulation Business Unit