

WELCOME NOTE



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Congress Convenor, SA Heart® 2024

Welcome to the SA Heart® Congress 2024

The SA Heart® Annual Congress will be held from 8 - 10 November 2024, at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg. This year's theme, "Cardiology Connections", reflects our commitment to fostering collaboration and dialogue among cardiology professionals. The Congress provides a unique opportunity for experts, practitioners, and researchers from around the world to converge, share knowledge, and explore the latest advancements, challenges, and innovations in cardiovascular medicine.

The event will feature a rich programme of keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, and networking sessions. Designed to cover a comprehensive range of contemporary cardiology topics and their practical clinical applications, the Congress agenda is tailored to offer insights from leading figures in the field. Attendees will gain valuable knowledge about the latest developments in cardiology and their potential impact on patient care.

A key focus this year is on strengthening connections among the various special interest groups within SA Heart®, including SASCI, CISSA, CASSA, HEFSSA, ISCAP, and SASCAR. Through joint sessions, these groups will collaborate on cardiovascular themes with the goal of improving healthcare outcomes for people across South Africa.

We are excited to welcome a distinguished faculty, both local and international. A highlight will be a cardiovascular team from the Mayo Clinic - featuring Prof Vuyi Nkomo (Imaging Cardiologist), Prof Soron Pislaru (Chair, Structural Heart Disease), and Prof Jean Crestanello (Chair, Cardiothoracic Surgery) - who will lead an echocardiography workshop on Friday morning, 8 November. This workshop will incorporate innovative approaches to learning, sharing, and professional growth.

Dr Thomas Alexander from India will deliver an enlightening session on establishing STEMI networks in South Africa. Our national STEMI SA programme aims to enhance timely presentation, access to healthcare, and ultimately, reperfusion therapy. On the final day of the Congress, we will connect industry leaders, medical aid funders, and healthcare professionals at the Access to Health Care Imbizo to further these critical discussions. We are also privileged to host Prof Stylianos Pyxaras from Germany and Dr Andrew Ludwiniec from the United Kingdom, who are international experts on chronic total occlusions and complex coronary interventions. Additionally, Prof Thierry Lefevre from France will join our esteemed local experts in the interventional community to address these important topics.

In a new addition to the programme, we will hold an imbizo on rheumatology and cardiac diseases, offering updates from SASCAR on cardiomyopathies, research sessions, and discussions of over 40 submitted abstracts.

Our paediatric colleagues have also organised an excellent parallel programme, featuring Prof Krishna Kumar from India and Prof George McDaniel from the United States of America, with a pre-Congress workshop and highly interactive sessions that will incorporate insights from local experts.

This year, we are introducing a Heartbeat Stage, which will feature insightful talks, engaging presentations, and a special networking address. We are honoured to have Dr Imtiaz Sooliman from Gift of the Givers, who will share his thoughts on "Connecting Hearts and Social Responsibility".

At its core, SA Heart® has a united goal: To advance cardiovascular care through education, research, and advocacy. Connecting colleagues - whether in the private or public sectors, industry, government, as mentors, or students - will be central to achieving this aim.

Our vision is to improve cardiovascular care for all in South Africa by fostering these connections and supporting the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Ahmed Vachiat
Congress Convenor, SA Heart®