

# KICKSTARTING 2025

WITH EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION, AND  
IMPACT!



## Stronger Together: Educating, Innovating & Advocating

As we wrap up the first quarter, we reflect on the progress made and the connections strengthened.

At the end of 2024, we finalized our year plan—laying out a full and focused schedule for 2025. We've already shared some of our key initiatives with our sponsors, reaffirming our dedication to expanding impact, raising awareness, and strengthening support for South African Ostomates.

As new challenges arise and information evolves, we continue to adapt—remaining committed to our goals and the communities we serve. This quarter, we've launched educational initiatives, embraced technology, and uplifted Ostomates through advocacy and storytelling rooted in lived experience—because we are always **Stronger Together!**



## Stoma Workshop for the Frail – Hosted by South African Women's Federation (SAVF)

We were honored to partner with the South African Women's Federation (SAVF) for an educational stoma care workshop on February 3, 2025, in Delmas, Mpumalanga.

Heather White and Sr. Jolanda J van Noordwyk (Sr. Mzi) led a session covering gastrostomies, wound care, stomal therapy, and stoma complications, followed by a hands-on workshop with 25 nurses.

Feedback was incredibly positive, with delegates praising the impact on their skills and confidence. A big thank you to SAVF, our suppliers, and a special shout-out to Heather and Jolanda for their exceptional work!

## KICKING OFF 2025 WITH KNOWLEDGE: OUR FIRST WEBINAR ON FASTING AS AN OSTOMATE

SASS started the year by tackling an important and often overlooked topic—Fasting as an Ostomate. Whether for religious observances or intermittent fasting for health, understanding hydration, nutrition, and electrolyte balance is critical for Ostomates.

Our first webinar of 2025 brought together Ostomates, healthcare professionals, and dietitians to share:

- ✓ Practical tips for staying hydrated and nourished while fasting
- ✓ Real-life experiences from Ostomates who observe religious fasts
- ✓ Expert recommendations to ensure safe and successful fasting

This webinar sparked meaningful discussions and knowledge-sharing, proving once again that when we come together as a community, we grow stronger.



### LIVED EXPERIENCE TALKS: AMPLIFYING OSTOMATE VOICES

This quarter, SASS had the privilege of sharing real-life Ostomate stories at three key platforms, reinforcing the importance of lived experience in healthcare education:

- ✓ **FORTEABILITY** – A powerful event showcasing how individuals with medical conditions and disabilities adapt, thrive, and inspire. We highlighted the daily challenges Ostomates face, from access to proper pouching systems to the need for greater societal understanding.
- ✓ **Groote Schuur Hospital** – Engaging with medical professionals and students, we shared firsthand experiences of living with a stoma, helping bridge the gap between clinical knowledge and patient realities.
- ✓ **District Nurses in Paarl** – We are honored to be invited to introduce SASS and share the lived experience with District Nurses in the Paarl region of the Western Cape. These conversations are vital in ensuring that frontline healthcare providers understand the unique challenges Ostomates face.

Why does this matter? Because when lived experience is included in healthcare education, it leads to better patient care, more empathy, and stronger advocacy. Together, we are shaping a future where every Ostomate feels seen, heard, and supported. Stronger Together!



SASS shared real-life Ostomate stories at Paarl Hospital highlighting daily challenges and the importance of empathy in healthcare.

## **STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AND EXPANDING REACH**

Faizel Jacobs has been appointed by the European Ostomy Association and 14 African Ostomy Associations to lead a steering committee focused on the formal establishment of the African Ostomy Association, which will unite all 48 countries across Africa.

We are currently in discussions with 14 countries showing interest in this initiative.

Fairbridges Wertheim Becker, a Cape Town-based law firm, is being appointed to register the entity. Conversations with Coloplast and Convatec have been held to understand challenges in getting their products into these countries, and we are awaiting a meeting date with Hollister.

We will also facilitate ostomy care nursing training across these countries, working closely with surgeons' requests and in alignment with the European Ostomy Association, of which SASS is a proud member.



### **SASS & FOOTPRINTS TO AFRICA: A GROWING PARTNERSHIP**

SASS is thrilled to continue our partnership with Footprints to Africa, an organization dedicated to improving healthcare access across the continent. Through their generous product donations, we are able to provide essential support to the ostomy community in Southern Africa.

These donations will also serve as the foundation for a valuable data mining exercise, helping us better understand the needs of ostomates.

The first data mining session will take place during a workshop at Helen Joseph Hospital in April and May 2025, where healthcare professionals will receive essential ostomy care training.

This initiative is an important step in improving patient care and ensuring access to the products and resources ostomates need to thrive. Stay tuned for more updates!



#### **FOOTPRINTS 2 AFRICA**

Hope • Compassion • Dignity



Strengthening care and support for  
ostomates with Footprints to Africa's generous  
donations and SASS's ongoing initiatives



## **INTRODUCING THE SASS ADVISORY COMMITTEE!**

SASS has established an expert Advisory Committee, bringing together Colorectal Surgeons, Stoma Nurses (public & private), Dieticians, and Rehabilitation Specialists from both the private sector and the University of Cape Town. We are still seeking a Urologist, Counsellors, and an Occupational Therapist to further strengthen the team.

This committee will play a vital role in driving SASS initiatives, including:

- ✓ Setting a National Minimum Standard for Stoma Care – Creating a framework for equitable, interdisciplinary, and accessible ostomy care.
- ✓ Advocating for Stoma Therapy as a Recognized Specialty – Engaging the NDoH and SANC to formalize and expand stoma therapy training.

A key focus is gathering statistical data to support advocacy and demonstrate the need for change. Our first meeting took place on February 27, 2025, with a follow-up scheduled for April. As we chart the path forward, we'll share more updates—exciting times ahead!



## **SASS EMBRACES AI FOR SMARTER CONTENT & GREATER IMPACT**

SASS is harnessing the power of AI to enhance our social media content, making education more engaging and accessible.

This includes breaking down our monthly Virtual Webinars into bite-sized videos shared throughout the month—helping drive more traffic to the full sessions.

Our last webinar's average watch time has increased to 24:26—almost 10 minutes longer than before! With AI-driven content, we aim to boost both viewership and engagement, ensuring more ostomates and healthcare professionals benefit from our resources.

AI is a game-changer in education, allowing us to deliver targeted, digestible, and impactful information that meets people where they are. Stay tuned for more dynamic, AI-powered learning from SASS!



**Smarter content, stronger impact—  
SASS is using AI to educate and  
engage like never before!**

# LOOKING AHEAD: THE POWER OF A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

As we step into the next quarter, our mission remains clear:

- ♥ Educate – through webinars, workshops, and digital content
- ♥ Advocate – for access to the right ostomy products and fair policies
- ♥ Support – by fostering a community where every Ostomate feels seen and heard

Our Multi-Disciplinary Advisory Committee truly embodies our theme, **Stronger Together**, bringing experts from various fields to drive meaningful change. Their collaboration strengthens our efforts, ensuring that every Ostomate benefits from comprehensive, patient-centered care.

Our progress proves one thing—when we work together, we create lasting impact. Whether through shared experiences, technology-driven advocacy, or empowering caregivers, every step we take moves us closer to holistic and equitable ostomy care for all South African Ostomates.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Let’s keep building a future where every Ostomate can thrive!

With gratitude,

**The SASS Team**



## A Message from Our Chairperson, Faizel Jacobs

As we continue our journey in advocating for equitable ostomy care, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors—Coloplast, OMS Medical, and Hollister.

Your unwavering support has been instrumental in helping SASS drive our mission and objectives, ensuring that ostomates across South Africa receive the care and resources they deserve.

This partnership highlights the power of collaboration between civil society and the private sector, demonstrating what is possible when we work together for a common cause. Moving forward, we hope to build on this foundation by strengthening our engagement with the State Sector, further expanding access to quality ostomy care.

Thank you for being part of this journey—we look forward to achieving even more together. **Stronger Together!**

