



## WHAT IS COHSASA?

COHSASA is a not-for-profit organisation that works throughout Africa to strengthen and improve health systems through the application of professional standards, quality improvement (QI) methods and accreditation.

It provides these services to a range of healthcare facilities – hospitals, primary health care settings, hospices, day surgery clinics and consulting rooms.

By implementing standards and putting in place quality improvement initiatives, facility teams can improve the standard of care and degree of safety to patients, staff and visitors and encourage a culture of striving for excellence in health service delivery.

It has been shown that the accreditation programme gives a good return on investment. Implementing the programme saves money, reduces medical errors and saves lives.

***“Providing the highest quality of care while ensuring patient safety should be the goal of every healthcare facility. Accreditation not only establishes high quality standards but also strengthens and leads to an overall improvement of medical care. This is a strong rationale that justifies the need for quality improvement and accreditation programmes and ultimately guarantees a return on investment.”***

– Dr Edgar Kalimba, Senior Consultant Paediatrician/ Pulmonologist and past CEO of King Faisal Hospital (2019-2021), the first facility in Rwanda to receive a four-year accreditation award from COHSASA in 2020.

In its 29 years of operation, COHSASA has worked with over 600 facilities in both the public and private sectors in 13 countries in Africa. COHSASA’s focus is on capacity-building: to empower healthcare workers to develop a mindset that constantly looks for ways to deliver excellent patient care, developing the skills and knowledge of all to carry that out.

Using the accreditation standards as their guide, facility staff make incremental improvements and monitor them using COHSASA’s web-based Quality Information System (CoQIS). This helps the team to prioritise the work that must be done to fill the gap between what currently exists in all areas of the facility and what needs to be in place. CoQIS provides continuous access to the standard compliance and quality improvement data, allowing progress to be tracked and comparisons made that enable healthcare workers to deliver care that is increasingly safe and efficient.

The implementation of the standards and a coordinated quality improvement programme is followed by an independent, external survey conducted by peers to measure the extent to which the facility has met the requirements of the standards. If the standards are significantly compliant, the facility receives an accreditation award, valid for a specified time.

The COHSASA accreditation programme is voluntary and has been implemented in both public and private healthcare facilities. COHSASA works with the healthcare team to assess the pace at which the programme can be fully implemented, and accreditation achieved. This helps those facilities that are starting from a lower base and need time to put systems and processes in place.

COHSASA has achieved global recognition and is the only sub-Saharan accreditor that is itself accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care External Evaluation Association (ISQuaEEA). This body’s primary programme is the International Accreditation Programme (IAP) which delivers a unique global accreditation service to health and social care external evaluation organisations and standards developing bodies. The IAP enables these organisations to demonstrate their credibility and benchmark their performance on an international level.

This recognition has been in place for COHSASA since 2002 as it has been accredited continuously by ISQuaEEA and its current accreditation awards for the organisation, standards and surveyor training programme are valid until 2027.