REGISTRATION FORM FOR WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Details of person making submission (PLEASE PRINT)

Name and Surname: MS MAGGIE ROUX

Name of Organisation or Entity: THE SA REFLEXOLOGY SOCIETY

Contact Details: 021 558 9868: Email info@sareflexology.org.za

Physical/Postal Address: 76 WAGENAAR STREET, MONTE VISTA

Required Details

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☐ Yes ☑ No

Does your submission contain any confidential information? If yes, please also file Form “CC7”

☐ Yes ☑ No
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ISSUES:
This submission is made by The South African Reflexology Society (TSARS) as a professional society representing therapeutic reflexologists on a national basis. TSARS represent some 240 of the 593 therapeutic reflexologists registered with the Allied Health Professions Council [AHPCSA] in the country. There are two other professional bodies, The National Reflexology Association and IARAMT Alumni Association.

TITLE: REFLEXOLOGY/THERAPEUTIC REFLEXOLOGY [See page 1 of submission]
It is to be noted that the profession around the world is referred to as Reflexology, while the AHPCSA-registered profession in South Africa is known as Therapeutic Reflexology. This serves to distinguish it from in therapist doing reflexology in Spas and Wellness centres and the like and reflexology as practised by a therapeutic reflexologist.

- Reflexology: Reflexology is a holistic therapy based on the principle that every organ in the body is reflected on certain areas of the feet, legs, hands, face and ears.
- Techniques: The treatment process includes the application of specific hand, finger and thumb techniques in order to systematically stimulate the reflex areas on the feet, body, legs, hands, arms, face and ear, the manual mobilization of soft tissue structures or using other associated reflexology equipment for a therapeutic outcome and prevention of conditions of illness in patients.1 [see Annexure A in submission for techniques and application.]

Practice for gain in South Africa: A therapist who obtains a Therapeutic Reflexology qualification is obliged to register with the AHPCSA in terms of the Allied Health Professions Act, No 63 of 1982 and Regulations to practise for gain.

THE PROFESSION THERAPEUTIC REFLEXOLOGY2
Allied Health Professions Act, No 63 of 1982 and Regulations:
Reference to therapist in the Act.3
A therapist may:
- treat or provide treatment for diagnosed disease, illness or deficiencies in humans; or
- prevent such disease, illness or deficiencies in humans.
- Any reference in the Act, except in section 16(3), (4), (5) and (6), to practitioner includes a therapist.

Therapeutic reflexology is a Complementary and Alternative Medicine Modality [CAM] and does not replace medical treatment.

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1 Scope Of Practice of Registered Therapeutic Reflexologists - Annexure B
2 [See page 2 of submission]
3 [Sec 2 (b) and (c)]
STATEMENT ISSUES
BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS THAT HARM COMPETITION TO ENTRY AND EXPANSION IN THE HEALTHCARE VALUE CHAIN

1. Lack of understanding of the education and training of therapeutic reflexologists:
   There is a general misperception of the role that therapeutic reflexology can play in public and private healthcare sector in South Africa. This stems from a lack of understanding by the public and healthcare providers of the differences in education, training and techniques used between –
   - a therapist doing reflexology in a Spa environment with the focus on a pamper service for a client to feel good and better and
   - the therapeutic reflexologists with the focus specifically on health conditions or pain relief of the patient. Their education includes Pathophysiology, Anatomy, Physiology and an understanding of the biomechanics of the feet and foot conditions [See par 1 of submission]

Certificate/diploma in reflexology
Certificate/diploma in Reflexology: SPA Colleges and Somatology: Training is related to the health, skin and beauty therapies. The courses include reflexology, aroma therapy and massage which can be confused with the professions registered with the AHPCSA, therapeutic reflexology, therapeutic aromatherapy and therapeutic massage.
   - The courses are short course. [REFLEXOLOGY 60 Hours @ R4250].
   - Students qualify to do reflexology for gain.

National Diploma Therapeutic Reflexology: Allied Health Therapies as registered with SAQA indicates that qualification for therapeutic reflexology falls into the sub-field “Promotive Health, Developmental Service, Preventive Health, Curative Health and Rehabilitative Health.
   - This is a full time two year course that includes practical work, minimum 200 hours, on patients with various health conditions @ R45,000.00.
   - Students qualify to practise therapeutic reflexology and have to register with the Allied Health Professions Council to practise for gain.

2. Limited access for internship
   AHPCSA Regulation R127, 2001, (reg. 44)), stipulates that Therapeutic Reflexology is a two year training programme and students need to do an internship.
   Access to do internship in public or private health care centres is limited due to the HPCSA legislation related to the performance of certain acts by unregistered persons of that Council.
   In Hospitals where students are allowed to do their practical work on patients, it is done purely with the “goodwill” of medical professionals often due to personal networks.

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4 [See par 1.3 – 1.6.3 of submission]
5 http://www.beautytherapyinstitute.co.za/
6 SAQA, National Diploma: Allied Health Therapies
8 [See par 2 of submission]
9 HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACT 56 OF 1974, Sec 39.
Students over the years, did case studies that included conditions such as cerebral palsy, pain management for diabetics with peripheral neuropathy, infertility, illness due to emotional experiences/trauma and chronic stress, sleep disorders, stroke, cancer patients and the effects of chemotherapy.

3. Competency of the therapeutic reflexologist in South Africa

Although TR therapists do referrals to other healthcare professionals they experience a lack of referrals from them. This could be attributed to the fact that these professionals are not aware of the professional competency of the therapeutic reflexologist. The public are more aware of the competency of a Spa therapist.

The health professionals who have worked closely with the students and registered therapeutic reflexologists, doing voluntary work, have acknowledged their competency and the benefit of the treatments and consider them to be an important component in the management of healthcare. Examples cited in various wards in the Red Cross Children’s Hospital Burns Unit and Organ Transplant Unit, Tygerberg Hospital, Witrand Hospital in Potchefstroom.

4. Factors limiting the promotion and practice of therapeutic reflexology

There are legal and various other factors that are limiting the promotion of the profession such as unregistered therapists using the title “therapeutic reflexologist”, integration of “reflexology” with other massage therapies for gain, restrictions on advertising of this registered profession, [therapeutic reflexology] and failure to obtain tariff codes.

5. Access to private and public healthcare facilities

The Therapeutic reflexologist is self-employed and qualified to contribute effectively and professionally to primary health care in South Africa. The exclusion from practice in public and private health facilities, except for working on a voluntary basis and with the “goodwill” of the ward supervisors, has been detrimental to the expansion of the profession. In recent years therapists, contributed to the healthcare value chain [see par 5.2.3 & 5.2.4] but although they had empathy for the patients they cannot continue with this service due to the lack of income. This means that therapists stop their services to find an alternative career instead of strengthening the human resources in healthcare “to achieve the objective outcomes of good health in South Africa’s health sector” [Director General, Malebona Precious Matsoso [HRH, page 8].

6. Medical Schemes

The stalling of the NHRPL process to obtain tariff codes for therapeutic reflexology services means that services are not claimable from the medical schemes that do make benefit provision for reflexology treatments. This limits patients’ choices of healthcare and their ability to follow an affordable alternative treatment plan.

Most medical schemes exclude therapeutic reflexology from services covered by the scheme. Any cover that may be offered by some schemes is limited to the members’ savings. The process to negotiate tariff codes with Medical Scheme administrators for therapeutic reflexology will soon be taken up by representatives from the profession on a voluntary basis.

10 [See par 3 of submission.]
11 [See par 4 of submission]
12 [See par 5 in submission]
13 [See par 6 in submission]
7. **Geographic distribution of therapeutic reflexologists in South Africa**\(^\text{14}\)

There are 593 therapists registered with AHPCSA. The majority, 312, [53%], is in Gauteng but it includes the therapeutic reflexologists in Pretoria and Johannesburg area, Western Cape 125, [21%]; KwaZulu Natal 86, [15%]; Eastern Cape 29, [5%]; Free State 9, North West and Mpumalanga 12, [2%] and Limpopo 4, [1%]. 4 therapists are outside the boundaries of South Africa.
Therapeutic reflexologists with a practice number total 289. Many therapists indicated that once tariff codes are available they will apply for a practice number.

8. **Scarcity of Therapeutic reflexologists and their skills**\(^\text{15}\)

In January 2010 registered therapists totalled 899. In October 2014, 593 therapists are registered to practise therapeutic reflexology

Therapeutic reflexologists have to set up a private practice within Rules and Regulations and must pay professional fees to practice for gain while the unregistered reflexologist is not restricted to private practice and has access to a wider range of job opportunities. This limitation on the therapeutic reflexologist's ability to be self-employed and earn a feasible income from his/her profession has resulted in a drop in the number of registered therapists as people exit the profession to enter other careers.

The erosion of therapeutic reflexology skills in the market is compounded by the fact that, over the last five years, a number of the private training colleges have closed due in the main to a drop in student numbers. For example, in 2011 there were 70 enrolments at one of the training institutions, while this year, 15 student enrolled at February 2014. Reasons for this drop in student enrolments may be found in the affordability of training, availability of training institutions, and more especially in the lack of job opportunities available to students once they complete their studies.

Full time employment opportunities in public or private health care facilities are not available to therapeutic reflexologists, although some do practise in healthcare and special care centres on a voluntary basis and are considered a valuable part of the health management team. For example, oncology units in various hospitals, Helen Joseph HIV Clinic, Renal Unit Sunninghill Hospital, Potchefstroom Physical Rehab Unit.

**Effect on the profession of access to public and private health Care facilities and inclusion in the National Health Insurance [NHI]**

Therapeutic Reflexology, as an Allied Health therapy, and a CAM model, could augment the human resources required to meet new service demands of the NHI and primary healthcare clinics. They are able to contribute professionally and effectively to the health workforce in the management of various chronic conditions such as Tuberculosis, Diabetes, Hypertension, HIV/AIDS.

9. **Relationships**\(^\text{16}\): AHPCSA acknowledges The SA Reflexology Society, The National Association for Reflexology and, as from May 2014 the IARAMT Alumni Association.

\(^{14}\)[See par 7 of submission]
\(^{15}\)[See par. 8 of submission]
\(^{16}\)[See page 22 of submission]
10. CONCLUSION

Access to health care centres for therapists in other countries.

Statutory Recognition: On 3 November 2000, Parliament passed the Bill and South Africa was the first country to recognise reflexology as a health care profession. But internationally, there has been greater progress in the recognition for therapists to find a career opportunity in public and private health care centres.

International Career opportunities for reflexology therapists

- **Research studies in the U.S. and around the world** indicate positive benefits of reflexology for various conditions. There are several well-designed studies, funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health that indicate reflexology’s promise as an intervention to reduce pain and enhance relaxation, sleep, and the reduction of psychological symptoms, such as anxiety and depression\(^{17}\).

- In Denmark, Finland and Australia, reflexology is part of the National Health Service. The Danish government funded research found many health benefits, including a gain of energy, improved mood and improved sleep.\(^{18}\)

- Reflexologists in **New Zealand have the opportunity to work** within a professional setting in a complementary or integrated medical health centre.

- In the **United Kingdom** qualified Reflexologists **may find formal employment** in Hospitals, Hospices, Clinics, Private Health Establishments and other Health Clubs, Holiday resorts etc.\(^{19}\)

- In **Australia** there are career opportunities in education, community health care services, social welfare and health retreats\(^{20}\).

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\(^{18}\) Reflexology for Complementary Health Care, Elisa Lanau DIP REFLEXOLOGY, MRNZ, NZCHP, TUTOR, CERT ED. [www.wellbeingonbealey.co.nz](http://www.wellbeingonbealey.co.nz)

\(^{19}\) International Institute of Reflexology, UK Careers In Reflexology. [http://www.reflexology-uk.net/site/about/careers-in-reflexology](http://www.reflexology-uk.net/site/about/careers-in-reflexology)