On 11 April 2011 the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, signed the government gazette declaring allergology a sub-speciality of medicine, heralding a new era for those committed to treating patients with allergic disorders. This has been achieved by the efforts of many individuals in ALLSA as well as others who have been supportive of our speciality. We thank them all for their untiring effort. Our jubilation is mixed with a tinge of sadness in that Cas Motala is not here to celebrate with us. He worked very hard to get us this far. Cas would have been very proud of this achievement.

The addition of this specialisation places a huge responsibility on the shoulders of those promoting the practice of allergology in this country. This applies particularly to those in teaching institutions, where syllabi and teaching programmes for prospective allergologists will have to be set up. This is not an easy task and will require commitment and resilience from those involved in this process. Allergology interfaces with many disciplines of medicine such as immunology, pharmacology, pulmonology, aerobiology, entomology, paediatrics, dermatology, otorhinolaryngology, and pathology. The teaching programme will need rotations through these different disciplines in order to equip the allergologist with the various aspects of our discipline. This is a daunting task. We look forward to the first batch of allergology registrars joining the rotation.

I would like to congratulate Prof Mohamad Jeebhay on his very good inaugural lecture (reprinted in the Allergies in the Workplace feature in this issue) as full Professor in the Department of Occupational Medicine at UCT. I also congratulate Prof Sam Risenga who has been appointed as Associate Professor in the Department of Paediatrics at Medunsa. Lastly our congratulations to Mike Levin on being appointed head of the Allergy Clinic at Red Cross Children’s Hospital. We wish them well in their new posts.

ALLSA in partnership with Discovery Health has embarked on a national Allergy Masterclass programme. The first one held in Johannesburg last year was very successful. The next one will be in Durban in August this year. These classes are useful for prospective candidates who want to write the diploma in allergology. Please watch the press for details. Please see p. 117 for the Allergy Masterclass programme with details of speakers, topics, venue and how to register.

ALLSA has launched a fund in memory of the late Prof Cas Motala. The money will be used for the training of future allergologists. We have already received a sum of R25 000 from the Singapore Allergy Society. This is in appreciation of the significant contribution that Cas made to the Singapore Allergy Society. Cas was a guest of the Singapore Allergy Society at their annual congress when he met his untimely death. ALLSA is grateful to the Singapore Allergy Society for their generous contribution. Further details of this fund will be made available to potential donors.

The ALLSA/PMG joint congress will be held in October this year. We have planned a fantastic programme for all delegates. We have invited very distinguished international speakers who have a special interest in gastrointestinal allergy and primary immunodeficiency. The programme is outlined in this journal and on our website. Please register early to secure your place. We look forward to seeing you there.

Ahmed Manjra
Chairman