

## SADCAS ACCREDITS FIRST ALLERGOLOGY LABORATORY

SADCAS is proud to announce the accreditation of the Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory to ISO 15189:2012. The Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory, a subsidiary of Twin Palms Medical Centre is the first allergology laboratory to be accredited by SADCAS. The Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory based at 113 Kwame Nkurumah Avenue, in Harare, Zimbabwe has been accredited in 5 test methods under the scopes Chemistry and Serology. The Laboratory has been granted the unique accreditation number: MED 039; indicating that the Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory is now a SADCAS accredited medical laboratory. The certificate which was issued on 16 October 2019 is valid for 5 years until 15 October 2024. The Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory's is the 39<sup>th</sup> medical laboratory to be accredited by SADCAS and the 5<sup>th</sup> medical laboratory in Zimbabwe to be accredited by SADCAS.

The accreditation certificate handover ceremony which was held together with ISO 9001:2015 certificate handover to Twin Palms Medical Centre by the Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ) was held on 10 January 2020 at Cresta Oasis Hotel in Harare, Zimbabwe and started off with an opening prayer followed by introductions. In his welcome remarks, Professor Elopy Sibanda, the Laboratory Director thanked the guests for gracing the ceremony and congratulated the Laboratory and Medical Centre staff for the achievements which he prided in.



From Left to right: Mr Douglas Mangwanya, Dr Mudavanhu, Professor Sibanda, Mrs Mutasa and Mr Mutonono

In her certificate handover remarks Maureen P Mutasa, the SADCAS CEO highlighted the critical role played by medical laboratories in any health care delivery system and why it was important for medical laboratories to be accredited. “The competence and efficient operation of a health research laboratory and timeous delivery of accurate research results is critical in any health care delivery system. Accreditation which is the process of providing recognition to a conformity assessment body for its competence in performing specific tasks is the strategy for a medical laboratory to achieve this”, she said. The international standard ISO 15189 specifies the requirements for quality and competence particular to medical laboratories. She noted that a number of countries in the region, including Zimbabwe have embraced accreditation as a strategy for the competence of medical laboratories and this has spurred interest in the SADCAS Medical Laboratories Accreditation scheme under which the Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory is accredited with 60% of the applications under process being medical laboratories of which 5 are from Zimbabwe. “SADCAS is currently exploring the accreditation of diagnostic imaging service providers. The Medical/Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme (MIAS) which we aim to launch early 2021 will help service providers to ensure that their patients consistently receive high quality services delivered by competent personnel working in a safe environment” Mrs Mutasa

informed the guests. The accreditation of all these laboratories as well as diagnostic imaging service providers is critical in any health care delivery system. She therefore urged the Ministry of Health and Child Care to require accreditation not only of medical laboratories but diagnostic imaging service providers. She also encouraged the Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory to extend its scope of accreditation to other scopes of operation namely: Clinical Chemistry; Serology; Flow Cytometry; Haematology and Immunofluorescence services for the screening of autoimmune diseases.



Gamma Allergy and immunology Laboratory

In the address made on his behalf Honourable Dr John Mangwiro, Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care, highlighted the importance of accreditation and certification not only to the Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory and the Twin Palms Medical Centre but to the country as a whole as the Ministry strives to realize universal health coverage. He encouraged all service providers in the medical sector to make their services affordable to all clients in the private as well as public sectors. After the speech by the guest of honour, Mrs Mutasa then handed over the accreditation certificate to Professor Sibanda followed by the handover of the ISO 9001:2015 certificate by Mr Mutonono. The certificate handover was then followed by cakes cutting ceremony to celebrate the achievements.



Mrs Mutasa receiving a token of appreciation from Professor Sibanda

The handover ceremony was attended by over 50 Twin Palms Medical Centre and Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory Management and staff, Government officials, invited guests and the media. The SADCAS CEO was accompanied to the ceremony by Mrs Mildred Machiri, the National Accreditation Focal Point for Zimbabwe which is housed in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Tokens of appreciation were presented to Mr Elvis Makaza the Nominated Representative of Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory and Mr Ian Makupe the Management Representative for ISO 9001.

After the accreditation certificate handover all guests were invited for a meal. The vote of thanks was given by Mr Douglas Mangwanya, Director of Laboratory Services in the Ministry of Health and Child Care.

The Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory is a private laboratory that uniquely provides a comprehensive portfolio of tests that are focused on allergy and clinical immunology diagnostic services. The laboratory serves as a referral diagnostic centre for a range of allergy and immunology tests. The Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory is currently the only Laboratory in Zimbabwe that offers the molecular allergology testing using the Thermofisher ISAC panel which can simultaneously detect sensitization to 117 allergenic components from a single drop of serum. Additionally, the Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory is the first and only one in Zimbabwe that investigates insect (bee and wasp) venom and a panel of prescription drug allergies. The clinical immunology laboratory provides testing for the diagnosis of primary and secondary immunodeficiency including the diagnosis and monitoring of HIV infection and its treatment. The Laboratory's vision is "Not for us but for us all" befits and articulates Gamma Allergy and Immunology Laboratory's role in the health care delivery system.

Mrs Mutasa was taken on a tour of the laboratory on 11 January 2020.

