Welcome Statement by the Medical Director:

On behalf of the Medical Division of the South African National Blood Service, I would like to welcome you to our website and hope that you find it useful and informative.

From the day that human life is conceived, blood fulfils a life giving and nurturing role. Blood is the fluid of growth, transporting nourishment from digestion and hormones from glands throughout the body. Blood is the fluid of health, transporting disease fighting substances to the tissue and body waste to the kidneys.

Because it contains living cells, blood is alive. Unlike medications that are manufactured, blood cannot be manufactured. Healthy donors are the only source of blood for those who are in dire need it.

If it was not for blood donors, life-saving medical treatment for children with life threatening anaemia, trauma victims, women with pregnancy related complications, organ transplants, bone marrow transplants, complicated surgical procedures and cancer treatments would not be possible.
The universal access to safe blood is the lifeline for the healthcare system of any nation. As South Africans, we can all be proud of our dedicated and selfless voluntary donors who regularly donate blood to save lives of thousands of our people every year.

The role of the SANBS Medical Division

The following are the main strategic objectives of the Medical Division for the next 3-5 years:

- Provision of adequate and safe blood supply;
- Provision of high quality transfusion medical services;
- Education and Training of healthcare professionals on Blood Transfusion Medicine;

- Communication with internal and external stakeholders to promote the image and work of SANBS; and

- Conducting Research activities for continuous improvement of blood transfusion services.

The Medical Division provides medical support to all donor clinics, processing facilities and Hospitals Blood Banks and transfusion services. The Division is responsible for the development of policies and procedures to maintain the safety of blood supply and decrease the risk of transfusion transmissible infections. The division monitors and reports on adverse effects of blood transfusion and cases of blood donors that become positive for diseases markers.

It also ensures the health and wellbeing of blood donors through the development of guidelines for education of blood donors to enhance the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of prospective blood donors and the public.

The Division develops and implements Guidelines for appropriate clinical use of blood and blood products in South Africa. It provides consultation and educational services to medical specialists referring patients for therapeutic procedures such as therapeutic plasma exchange and bone marrow transplants.

The Division coordinates research into processes that improve the safety of the blood supply chain in South Africa. It also conducts research into innovative, evidence based diagnostic, clinical and therapeutic practices including the use of cord blood and stem cells for therapeutic purposes.

In summary, the Medical Division is committed to both the donors and recipients of blood to ensure a safe and sustainable blood supply in South Africa.

Best wishes to you all and hope you have a prosperous 2010.

Medical Director