

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ACTION COMMITTEE

It was decided at the 1981 National Council meeting that an Action Committee should be formed in an effort to improve the image of the physiotherapy profession in all spheres of society.

The members of the Action Committee decided that, as physiotherapists, we are not adequately qualified to assess what our image is/was and that professional help was required. This help would come in the form of a Communications Audit to be executed by a public relations company. This would cost R3 000.

This idea including the costs was presented at the September 1981 N.C.R. meeting, where it was agreed by all present that this audit should be undertaken. Furthermore, it was agreed that each branch should be responsible for raising the funds required. A loan was granted by N.E.C. and Mr D. Hilton-Barber of Hilton-Barber Associates was engaged to conduct the Audit.

The audit was defined as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of a body's (in this case, members of the physiotherapy profession) efforts to "talk to the public". Mr Hilton-Barber interviewed various members of the South African Society of Physiotherapy: physiotherapists in hospital practice, private practice and involved in teaching; hospital administrators, doctors and patients. This list was

felt to be sufficiently comprehensive to evaluate the profession. The findings of this audit were then presented to the Action Committee and to all members of the N.E.C.

It was decided that there is a definite need to change the existing status of the profession and thus a plan of action was drawn up. The objectives of the plan are:

- To improve the image of the profession of physiotherapy.
- To improve communication with key target groups.

The target groups are:

- Members of the S.A.S.P.
- Physiotherapists who are not members of the S.A.S.P.
- The Department of Hospital Services.
- Superintendents of Hospitals.
- The South African Medical and Dental Council.
- Specialists and General Practitioner Doctors.
- Supplementary Health Service Professions.
- Patients.
- Universities which teach physiotherapy.
- The media.
- The man in the street.

The Action Committee is already involved in several projects to improve the image of the profession and to communicate it to the target groups.