

HISTORY DOCUMENT

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PERSONS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY (NAPCP) 022-245 NPO

Cerebral palsy cases requiring care and treatment, many years ago, have been accommodated at the various centres established for physically disabled persons, and in Natal, cases falling in this category are recorded as far back as the nineteen-twenties.

Since its formation in 1939 the National Council of and for Persons with Physical Disabilities (formerly the National Council for the care of Cripples in South Africa), accepted cerebral palsy as physical disability and gave attention to particular needs of those suffering from this condition. Little was known about cerebral palsy in South Africa at that time and in 1942 the National Council set up a special Cerebral Palsy Committee to study the problem. It brought to the notice of the Government the high incidence of such cases being undertaken. It further recommended to the authorities that provision be made for those cerebral palsy cases which called for care in special institution and emphasised the unsuitability of treating such cases in orthopaedic institutions or in general hospitals.

In 1948 a group of parents of cerebral palsied children and interested people formed the Transvaal Association for the Care of Cerebral Palsy and set up in Johannesburg the first centre exclusively for cerebral palsy cases. This Centre took the form of a school and was started with 6 pupils under a speech therapist. Assistance was received from the Transvaal Education Department which made available the premises of the Forest Town Government School and by 1950 this school was operating with an increased staff and 18 pupils.

A similar school was opened in Pretoria in 1950 by the Pretoria and Northern Transvaal Cripple's Care Association and shortly after this a third school was opened for children with cerebral palsy in Cape Town.

In 1954 both the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa and the Transvaal Association for the Care of Cerebral Palsied felt that the time had come when the various bodies working in the field of cerebral palsy throughout the country, should meet together to pool their knowledge and experience and to co-ordinate their work. These two organisations agreed to combine their proposals and jointly convened a National Conference of all organisations, medical groups and provincial and Government Departments interested in cerebral palsy work. The conference was held in Johannesburg in September 1954 and adopted a number of resolutions, including the following:

That the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa be approached to consider the establishment of a permanent National Committee for Cerebral Palsy, on which all bodies interested in cerebral palsy would be duly represented. It was decided to recommend that the National Council for the Physically Disabled discuss this matter with all bodies concerned with cerebral palsy in South Africa.

In terms of this resolution, various meetings of interested bodies were convened by the National Council and as a result of these discussions, the National Council in October 1955 agreed to the formation of a National Cerebral Palsy Division. Within its framework, representation would be accorded to all organisations working in the field of cerebral palsy. The first meeting of the Management Committee of the National Cerebral Palsy Division was held in Johannesburg in December 1955. Every voluntary organisation in South Africa that was working in this field, with the exception of the Western Cape Province Cerebral Palsy Association and the United Cerebral Palsy Association, became affiliated to the National Cerebral Palsy Division. Negotiations continued with these two bodies inviting their co-operation and during 1956 the Western Cape Cerebral Palsy Association affiliated to the Division and thereafter, the U C P A also became a member organisation of the Division.

Further increased attention that was being paid to cerebral palsy and the realisation of the complex nature of this condition had led to the establishment by existing Associations for the Physically Disabled affiliated to the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa, of special committees or local associations to deal with cerebral palsy matters. Thereafter, five separate autonomous cerebral palsy associations came into being.

In 1978 the National Cerebral Palsy Division revised its programme of action and adopted the following eight points-

1. Recognizing the urgent and imperative need for full co-operation between those bodies in South Africa working on behalf of the cerebral palsied of all races, and the importance of complete co-ordination of programmes to prevent unnecessary duplication and waste of resources, the Division pledges itself to continue to work for unity in this field. It also undertakes to seek the co-operation of the Government and Provincial Administrations in its plans and operations.
2. To continue to develop and extend throughout the Republic facilities for the diagnosis, treatment, training and special education and accommodation of the cerebral palsied, to assist and support projects established by local communities in furtherance of these and to encourage and assist in the formation of new Cerebral Palsy Associations and Committees.

3. To continue and expand the programme of public education and information through the press and especially through the medium of the Cerebral Palsy Journal, the publication of brochures, leaflets, posters and instructional pamphlets, the making and distribution of films and by means of public lectures and conferences.
4. To promote the establishment of centres for the care and treatment of those cerebral palsy cases who cannot benefit from existing training programmes and facilities.
5. To promote and support measures and schemes for the training of personnel concerned with all aspects of the habilitation of the cerebral palsied.
6. To conduct surveys to establish the incidence of cerebral palsy and to assess the nature and extent of the problem in South Africa to serve as a guide in the provision of services and facilities for the cerebral palsied.
7. To press for research investigation into the cause, prevention, and management of cerebral palsy.
8. To promote and support measures and schemes for the habilitation, care and general welfare of the adolescent and adult cerebral palsied, including vocational assessment, training and employment, social and recreational needs, permanent residential care and sheltered employment.

The National Cerebral Palsy Division has from its inception been recognized by various Government Departments as the National Organisation for Cerebral Palsy and representatives of these Departments attended the annual meetings of the Division.

Meetings of the Division are attended by representatives of the constituent bodies, schools, institutions, and other allied organisations from every Province, as well as special members who include medical specialists, educationists, and other professionals in the field. These meetings have become a very valuable forum where problems besetting workers and institutions are discussed and policies worked out and adopted.

The first issue of the S A Cerebral Palsy Journal was published by the Division in May 1956 and this magazine was issued quarterly since that date. For financial and other reasons this publication was discontinued in 1991. Information pamphlets and brochures were historically issued by the Division and widely distributed.

Numerous training courses were conducted over the years for personnel working at cerebral palsy schools and centres. Persons actively engaged in cerebral palsy work in this country were sent on overseas study tours, where they attended conferences, visited cerebral palsy centres and held discussions with experts from various parts of the world.

At the request of the National Cerebral Palsy Division, a survey of the physical and mental status of the cerebral palsied children at schools in South Africa was undertaken by the National Bureau of Educational and Social Research and provided a great deal of valuable information.

The National Cerebral Palsy Division and its affiliated Associations were instrumental in the establishment of many schools catering for the cerebral palsied of all population groups.

Since the establishment of the Division in 1955, a national network of services for the cerebral palsied came into being throughout South Africa. Credit is due to the many paid and voluntary workers at regional and local level who gave unstintingly of their time and effort to provide as best a service as possible for cerebral palsy sufferers.

The establishment of the National Cerebral Palsy Division within the framework of the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa, made it possible to avoid unnecessary duplication, expense, and waste resources.

The value of the National Cerebral Palsy Division is amply demonstrated by the large attendance at its annual meetings held in rotation in the different provinces in South Africa.

In 2001 The National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa and the National Cerebral Palsy Division agreed that:

- The name of the Division be changed to the National Association for Persons with Cerebral Palsy (NAPCP).
- A separate Constitution be drawn up for the Association.
- Application be made for registration of the Association as a Non-profit Organisation.
- Whilst it would operate as a separate entity the administration of the Association's activities remain within the structures of the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa.

A constitution was drawn up and an application for registration as a Non-profit Organisation was submitted to the Directorate of Non-profit Organisations in 2002.

The newly constituted National Association for Persons with Cerebral Palsy was registered in terms of the Non-profit Organisations Act, 1997 and a certificate of registration issued on 4 November 2002.

The registration number of the Association is 022-245 NPO

At a Business Meeting in May 2018, it was agreed that the membership of the Management Committee be expanded to include one representative from each of the Provincial Cerebral Palsy Associations, being:

Western Cape Cerebral Palsy Association
Cerebral Palsy Association (Eastern Cape)
KwaZulu–Natal Cerebral Palsy Association
Gauteng Cerebral Palsy Association

GENERAL INFORMATION

MISSION

To take such actions in the area of operation as may be necessary to prevent the occurrence of cerebral palsy and to enable persons with cerebral palsy to attain their maximum level of independence and integration into the community.

OBJECTIVES

To promote:

- * **Its belief in the dignity, equality and value of all persons.**
- * **Such medical, educational, vocational and social services and facilities as may be required by persons with cerebral palsy to achieve independence.**
- * **An environment which is free from those physical, legal and attitudinal barriers which hinder the integration of persons with cerebral palsy into the community.**
- * **The availability of adequate personnel, assistive devices and other resources as are needed to achieve the aim.**
- * **Measures to prevent primary impairment.**
- * **Measures for the early detection and prompt and efficient treatment of persons who are or may become cerebral palsied.**

Approximately seventy organisations, schools, and other institutions, are represented on the National Association for Persons with Cerebral Palsy. These include Cerebral Palsy Associations, schools, workshops, and training centres.

Invitations to attend the annual conference of the National Association are also sent to relevant Government Departments and professional associations such as the Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Societies.

The National Association provides a national coordinating forum, whilst the actual services to persons with cerebral palsy is rendered at grass roots level by affiliated organisations and institutions. A wide variety of services are rendered including special education, workshops, clinics, social and vocational counseling, residential care, transport and independent living.

The annual Business Meeting and Conference of the National Association is hosted at various venues by affiliated Associations and / or schools. Selected topics covering all fields of service on behalf of persons with cerebral palsy are considered at the conference, following which resolutions are passed for further in-depth consideration and implementation.

This provides a valuable forum for all concerned to take part in discussions and to contribute to the formulation of policies for the expansion of services at all levels, for persons with cerebral palsy.

In hosting the annual conference affiliated organisations have an opportunity to obtain publicity at local and regional level and are afforded an opportunity for experts within their organisations and area which they serve, to participate in the conference.

In 2023 the Constitution of the NAPCP was amended. It was resolved that Meetings of the Association shall be held every two years and that such meeting shall be designated the General Meeting. Representation shall consist of one representative of each Provincial Association and one representative of each of the approximate seventy schools, and other institutions represented on the NAPCP.