

# Into the new - 12 Jan 2009

BY BRIDGET FARHAM



As we enter 2009 we can look forward to much change - both internationally and locally.

President Elect Barak Obama takes office on Tuesday next week - and his presidency will hopefully see the end of the anti-science approach of the Bush administration. For medical science this should mean that stem cell research will once again be adequately funded. This could bring hope to the tens of thousands around the world who suffer from debilitating diseases such as Parkinson's disease for whom stem cell therapy may well provide an answer to treatment. The same goes for those with spinal cord injury, who could regain some or all of their lost function.

Locally, our new Minister of Health will hopefully survive at least until the promised elections in early April. During that time she will be expected to save a failing public health system and resuscitate our HIV treatment programme. So far she has shown great promise and the health system is once again looking as though it can get back on track. But there is an enormous amount to do - if she lives up to her promise we can only hope that she will continue as Minister of Health after the elections.

In the private sector, doctors are rebelling against ill-thought through legislation limiting their ability to dispense medication.

It looks as though it will be an interesting year.

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