

THE BULLETIN



2023 taking shape The winds of change

As the pavements pile up with fallen leaves and immunity supplements line retailers' shelves, it is safe to say that winter is well and truly here, heralding a busy few months for those in primary healthcare in particular. In addition to the usual year-round ailments, the season brings with it colds, flu and other respiratory concerns, resulting in higher rates of absenteeism in the workplace thereby putting pressure on our nation's employers who, in the current economic climate, are already feeling the squeeze.

This can be an especially difficult time for businesses operating in certain regions of our country, such as Limpopo and Mpumalanga, where a mere 8.2% and 9.1% of people belong to medical schemes respectively. This is particularly interesting, and concerning, considering that both Limpopo and Mpumalanga are major contributors to our economy with Limpopo acting as a main agricultural and mineral resource hub while Mpumalanga is responsible for 80% of South Africa's coal production along with other key economic sectors including agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and tourism.

Even in the provinces with the highest rate of medical aid coverage such as Gauteng (24%) and Western Cape (23.7%), the gap between those who have private healthcare access and those who are reliant on public healthcare remains considerable. Within the National HealthCare Group we have long maintained that one of the biggest challenges the healthcare industry faces, is the successful, strategic management of scarce resources and we believe that the private sector has an invaluable role to play in alleviating what is a troubling situation.

While many companies in the private healthcare sector in South Africa have done their best to design medical cover that is accessible, affordable and of good quality, few have achieved much success and decent, sustainable private healthcare remains as unaffordable to most South Africans as ever.

On a positive note, we believe that the need to accelerate the current pace of healthcare delivery is becoming a catalyst for unprecedented innovation and growth within the private healthcare sector with the likes of Standard Bank, TymeBank and others making a tremendous contribution in this regard.

In other good news – while winter may be here, so too are the winds of change. We at National HealthCare Group are hard at work with the continued roll-out of our cost efficient and technology driven primary healthcare solutions that are increasing healthcare access across the entire country – more of which you can read about in this issue.

We hope you enjoy this latest issue of The Bulletin and we wish you all the best for this next quarter of the year.

Warmest regards

Dr Reinder Nauta

Executive Chairperson National
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Patrick Lubbe

Chief Executive Officer National
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*Source: <https://bit.ly/3ojjWhx>



Welcome to Lion Health

It is our pleasure to welcome Lion Health to the National HealthCare fold. The company commenced its migration onto the National HealthCare platform at the beginning of April.

To our healthcare partners please be on the lookout for Lion Health members, all of whom carry a special Lion Health membership card. Please note that while Lion Health's members have unlimited visits to a National HealthCare Network provider, pre-authorisation is required after three visits.

Lion Health, which has three plans including a Day-to-Day, Hospital and Combined Plan prides itself on being a business with strong guiding principles and a client-centric focus. Parent company, LionLife is a black-owned life insurance company with a proud 99-year track record.

Together with Lion Health, we are focusing our efforts on providing members with quality, affordable health insurance cover.

With the employed but medically uninsured market in South Africa now estimated at 5.5 million people, affordability has in many ways become an impenetrable barrier to accessing quality healthcare services in our country.



Affordability need not be an impenetrable barrier – access to quality primary healthcare is changing for SA’s workforce

by Patrick Lubbe

With the employed but medically uninsured market in South Africa now estimated at 5.5 million people, affordability has in many ways become an impenetrable barrier to accessing quality healthcare services in our country.

Broadly speaking a lack of access to healthcare cover has resulted in a negative impact on productivity, which is affecting the profitability and ultimately the sustainability of businesses, as well as negatively contributing to our economy. The quality of life of employees, on the other hand, is impacted while earnings potential is substantially reduced thereby risking job security in a country where the unemployment rate was at 32.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022. When it comes to the overall health and wellbeing of South Africa’s workforce there are a number of additional worrying factors that need to be considered by employers looking to ensure a healthy, productive workforce.

- Only 27% of South Africans have access to private

healthcare while the majority, some 71%, are reliant on overburdened public health services.

- A minimum of 20% of blue-collar workers are diabetic and are generally unaware of this, which means their condition remains untreated.
- According to the World Health Organization the growth of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes is responsible for as much as 37% of productivity losses.

Given the vulnerability of consumer finances against a background of increased interest rates, which are now almost double those of in 2021, along with a general slowdown in growth prospects, there is little

hope on the horizon for the average working South African. This means that healthcare cover has in many instances become a bridge too far for the average employed individual with more and more working people looking to employers to provide at least some form of healthcare cover.

While our nation's current economic position is far from ideal, there are more and more options available to employers who may not yet be able to implement salary increases but who are looking for meaningful ways to add value for employees in the here and now.

So many employers are not aware of the significant difference they could make to the healthcare experience of their employees for even the most nominal amount. Even on the most constrained budget a company can fully alter its primary healthcare experience and begin to reshape this very human aspect of its business. The low-cost and emerging healthcare market is a relatively new segment of the greater South African healthcare landscape and here there is a reservoir of innovation that forward-thinking companies can tap into.

Solution-driven healthcare

It was in this spirit that the National HealthCare Group took its product and service offering to the four corners of South Africa in 2022. Bolstered by the reach and level of service that our national healthcare provider network of more than 12 000, we are seeing real, effective strides being made in broadening healthcare

access by partnering with prestigious organisations such as TymeBank, with the digital app-based TymeHealth product, and Standard Bank with the newly launched BeWell employer funded solution.

The answer to healthcare access and affordability lies in technology-driven primary healthcare products that are highly affordable for the employer and streamlined for the employee. By being able to immediately contact a nurse who will set up a doctor's appointment if needed, giving you access to medication, blood tests, x-rays, dentistry, optometry and so on, your day-to-day healthcare concerns are taken care of efficiently and effectively to the benefit of both the employee and employer.

Financial health is without question an essential component of employee wellbeing, and any product of this nature that takes that full picture into account will provide for a full suite of primary healthcare services as well as trauma, debt and legal counselling.

At National HealthCare Group we are seeing that by giving more South Africans access to affordable, quality primary healthcare, we can help to improve their day-to-day wellbeing, enhance productivity, and contribute to improved economic growth and prosperity. In this way, we are supporting the productivity and profitability of South African businesses. As we all know there is a direct societal benefit in that this ultimately drives the growth of the nation.





Branding in healthcare – what can it do for you?

In a digital world where much of our time is spent in front of screens, we are now exposed to more brands than ever before with studies estimating that some market segments are exposed to as many as 4 000 brands per day.

Amongst all this noise it can be hard to stand out from the crowd but when it comes to something as personal as primary healthcare, trust, open communication and reassurance are key to every successful interaction, whether you are a patient seeking care, a healthcare professional dispensing it or an employer who simply wants to know that the health of their human capital is in good hands.

That is why we wish to thank all those doctors in our network who have been putting up the National HealthCare Group signage at their practices and encourage those who have not yet done so to follow suit. Our growing brand symbolises affordability, reliability and access to quality care – a promise that aligns well with any practice aiming to further entrench itself as a provider of choice in the community that it serves.

We look forward to hearing and seeing more from those choosing to partner with us as together we continue to gain ground in broadening healthcare access.



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This is a closed, 'broadcast only' group where only the administrators can post news updates. Please join the NewsHub by scanning this QR code.



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To stay abreast of the latest news from National HealthCare Group please join our Doctors' Newshub on WhatsApp.