



THE BULLETIN

A National HealthCare Group Publication

After encouraging you, our valued readers and stakeholders, to 'dare mighty things', we took our own advice by making further meaningful strides in the world of primary healthcare provision. We have since clocked up several impressive highlights in previously uncharted territory. The results and overall impact have been heartening.

It has been all systems go for the MediClub™ product range, which extended its reach into the agricultural sector and student healthcare market while surpassing the 5 000-beneficiary mark in the corporate healthcare space in recent months.

Earlier this year, a national credit management services company and call centre moved all 1 500+ of its employees to the MediClub Elite™ option. This was the result of a 30-month pilot project that pitted our healthcare solutions, cost savings and service levels against that of another leading healthcare management company. Apart from securing annual savings of well over R800 000 in membership fees, a well-structured product, and the impressive service delivery of the MediClub™ client services team, ensured that National HealthCare Group came up trumps. Follow this link to the pilot study <https://bit.ly/3nAU9U8>.

MediClub Connect™ for agricultural workers, which has been specifically developed and tailored to the agricultural sector, was unveiled to a highly receptive audience at a meeting of the Stellenbosch Landbougenootskap in August.

Also amongst the oak-lined avenues of South Africa's second oldest town, and in an important first for students, we launched MediClub™ Student-Connect in collaboration with the University of Stellenbosch and Alexander Forbes. We anticipate that this product, specifically designed to provide improved healthcare access to students who benefit from NSFAS funding, will fulfil the pressing need for accessible and affordable healthcare for young people, who are so often financially pressed and far from home.

In other news, we are delighted to welcome Wellness Warehouse, an important player in the wellness space, to MediClub Connect™. We look forward to broadening access to healthcare to the employees of the company who joined MediClub™ at the beginning of October.

Yet another significant development from the National HealthCare Group is the introduction of our very own MediClub™ demarcated insurance product, which we recently launched in partnership with TymeBank. We will be sharing further news on this and other exciting developments with you in the very near future.

As we enter the final months of 2021, National HealthCare Group will continue resolutely to broaden access to private primary healthcare for employees and their families.

Along with the rest of South Africa we look forward to the turning of the COVID-19 tide, to a sense of normality and to a future where growth, prosperity and job creation can become a reality for our country and its people.

Best wishes

Dr Reinder Nauta and Patrick Lubbe



Community-based initiative addresses primary healthcare for often-overlooked elderly

“The elderly and vulnerable in South Africa are heavily under-resourced when it comes to accessing the healthcare they need. This is particularly regrettable when one considers that simple primary healthcare interventions can go such a long way to avoiding unnecessary illness in those over 65, the age group most likely to develop chronic disease.”

Dr Reinder Nauta, Chairman of the National HealthCare Group

The impact of Covid-19 on the elderly has been harsh, affecting even those who previously were able to maintain healthy lifestyles. As it is, the elderly as a sector is not considered high on the list of funding priorities. Most of the Corporate Social Investment spend in SA is directed towards education, followed by healthcare, but not particularly for older generations who are usually faced with additional challenges around access.

To alleviate at least a portion of this burden, National HealthCare partnered with Cape Town-based Neighbourhood Old Age Homes (NOAH), an organisation that supports those who all their lives have contributed to society and who now need help in accessing the care they deserve. Restoring dignity and respect is core to what NOAH does for social pensioners to ensure that their basic needs of housing, food and healthcare are met through socio-economic support.

National HealthCare Group made a donation to NOAH to help ensure that elderly individuals receive the quality primary healthcare services they need. A portion of the donation is towards quality healthcare for the patients at the NOAH Clinic Site B, Khayelitsha, while the second part is for the NOAH Woodstock Clinic to ensure that chronic and acute conditions are well-managed, treatment adherence is achievable, and protection against Covid-19 is provided.

More than 600 social pensioners will benefit from this donation, which will assist NOAH in continuing to provide quality healthcare for the elderly, who deserve to live with dignity in their golden years. The most prominent conditions being treated at the organisation's two primary healthcare clinics are diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and arthritis.

So much unnecessary discomfort and financial strain can be avoided if medical conditions are addressed early on with primary healthcare. This is an area of healthcare where greater access is imperative if we as a nation are ever to address the needs of the millions of individuals that make up our communities and workforces.

The National HealthCare Group is committed to providing ongoing assistance at primary healthcare level for communities and organisations such as this, as well as funding services for quality healthcare access on a wider scale in the country's employer market.



Enabledmed partners with Marie Stopes

Enabledmed has recently partnered with Marie Stopes South Africa to bring quality, personalised care to medical scheme members on *Makoti Comprehensive and Malcor D*.

With Marie Stopes, South Africa's largest non-profit provider of sexual and reproductive healthcare services, joining our network of healthcare providers, it is the aim of Enabledmed to provide much needed support at a time when patients are experiencing considerable emotional difficulties.



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Marie Stopes South Africa is well-known in the medical community for their expert and specialised knowledge in the field of sexual and reproductive health. As a member of a 37-country strong International Global Partnership, Marie Stopes has access to the latest innovations and international expertise in this field. Their accredited team of medical professionals follow the highest safety protocols, in line with guidelines set out by the World Health Organization.

Through the nine Marie Stopes clinics around South Africa, which are in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, North West Province, and the Free State, clients can access safe abortion care, HIV and STI testing and treatment, women's wellness services including pap smears, contraception including contraceptive pills, IUDs, injections, and implants, as well as emergency contraception, when needed.



Quality healthcare, an excellent, highly affordable incentive for employees

For many Capetonians the orange and white trucks of Ciolli Readymix, suppliers of concrete to the construction industry, are a familiar sight in and around the Cape. What is not visible is the ongoing attention to the drivers' health, which is essential for their safety and that of others on the road.

The company, which has been operational since October 2008 and has a fleet of approximately 50 large trucks sees their truck-drivers as the lifeblood of Ciolli Readymix. They know only too well that driving a heavy-duty vehicle can be stressful and requires so much more than high levels of driving skills. This means that drivers must always be in top form.

Numerous studies have found that truck drivers work under taxing physical conditions putting them at increased risk of chronic and other lifestyle-related illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. Given that the average cement mixer typically weighs between 11.8 and 31.8 tonnes, has a high centre of gravity and an uneven weight distribution, driving a ready mixer is not for the faint-hearted.

According to Stephen Ciolli, managing director of Ciolli Readymix the company takes the health and general wellbeing of all staff members, extremely seriously and it is therefore important that they have easy access to proper healthcare services.

The company joined National HealthCare Group's MediClub™ Premier in March 2018, and there are at present 94 staff, with an average age of 41, on the product. He says that between April 2020 and April 2021, the total administration and claims cost was R77 000 and that when measuring the improvements in productivity, safety and overall performance of the past three years, the cost involved has been negligible.

Since signing up for the product, staff who are ill are properly diagnosed and treated for health conditions and they are content in the knowledge that they are being cared for.

Dr Reinder Nauta, executive chairman of the National HealthCare Group believes that good healthcare is an important incentive that businesses can offer their employees – particularly in difficult times. He says it has been demonstrated time after time that the benefits of healthcare provision will always outweigh the cost. He adds that after more than three years on MediClub™ Premier the advantages of access to affordable healthcare have multiplied for Ciolli Readymix.

“When looking at a cost per member of less than R70 per month, over a period of twelve months, the message really hits home that this is a very small price to pay for something that is making a tangible and lasting difference to the workforce and ultimately to the bottom line of the business on a daily basis,” he says.

How does it work?

MediClub™ Premier is based on a medical reimbursement account model, which is underpinned by a low monthly administration fee and the provision of an initial float to cover the cost of medical claims, which not only makes it totally different but also a great deal more affordable than anything that is currently available in the market. Once the float is in place the client only settles the value of the monthly claims.

What does it offer?

The full spectrum of healthcare benefits including day-to-day primary care services, screening and management of chronic diseases, diagnostics such as X-rays and blood tests as well as maternity and HIV benefits are provided as part of the MediClub™ Premier service offering. In addition, an annual flu vaccination, wellness management as well as a 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme are available to employees.

How much does it cost?

Because of the carefully structured allowance model, the monthly cost of healthcare per employee for Ciolli Readymix comes in at R170 less than that of our closest competitor. In other words, our client is benefiting from savings of 70.84%. One of the reasons for this saving is that Ciolli Readymix has built up a surplus over the past three years, which means that their fees have not been increased for two years in a row. Given the financial hardships faced by so many businesses in our country during the past 16 months, this could not have come at a better time.

When comparing the total cost of administration fees and claims of R77 190 for the twelve month-period under review against the annual competitor average of R264 720, a saving of R187 530 was achieved for Ciolli Readymix.

What additional benefits are there?

Clients and employees also benefit from National HealthCare Group's innovative mobile communications and chat commerce technology, which delivers healthcare to the palm of the hand of the member, using a mobile phone and a series of WhatsApp prompts to pinpoint potential healthcare issues, was another important and popular differentiator.

In addition, members have access to a well-established provider network of approximately 12 000 healthcare practitioners, which offers a national footprint including contracted doctors, pharmacies, radiologists, and pathologists.

Paragon of patient centered care, Dr Allan Soundy fondly remembered



“Dr Allan Soundy was what I call an ‘old style’ GP who practised patient centred care, which we taught medical students at MEDUNSA during their rotation in Family Medicine.”

Dr Peter Makhambeni, Chief Clinician of National HealthCare Group network

The dedication, warmth, and professionalism of the late Dr Allan Soundy, a general practitioner and friend to many in Ga-Rankuwa and the wider South African medical community, who passed away on 21 July, will be fondly remembered by those who knew him.

Dr Soundy was one of the first doctors to join the Enabled Network in 1995 and was a family physician in the true sense who placed family above all else. A consummate professional, Dr Soundy dedicated his life to serving and caring for humankind. He will be remembered by all at National HealthCare for his dedication to his patients, professionalism, commitment to quality patient care, excellent skills, and clinical knowledge. Before his time with the National Health Care GP network, Dr Soundy studied medicine at the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA), qualifying in 1986.

Dr Makhambeni fondly recalls his first contact with Dr Allan Soundy in the 1980s when he came to consult at the Campus Health Service at MEDUNSA, now known as the Sefako Makgatho University. “I was then the Director of the Campus Health Service and Allan was a second-year medical student. Little did I know then that our paths would cross many times in the years to come.”

After completing his medical studies, Dr Soundy took over Dr Makhambeni’s practice in the TEBA Building in Zone 16 Ga-Rankuwa. The pair grew closer as they met many times over the years, often through primary healthcare networks.

“He would sometimes accompany me when I went to visit network doctors in the remote areas of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, and I used to enjoy his company on those long journeys. He was always jolly and had a loud laugh that you could hear from a distance. He was well loved by all those who knew him. He was the perfect gentleman, courteous and affable. Allan was very health conscious. He exercised regularly and was a jogger of note, taking part in many races and fun walks. He was very fit,” recalls Dr Makhambeni.

“I was one of the first to be informed when, one day as he was running, he was knocked down by a careless driver of a motor vehicle, fracturing his leg in the process. The amazing part was that when he related the incident to me, he laughed as he described how he ‘flew through the air’ after the impact. He was that kind of guy, who still saw the funny side of a very serious situation,” he adds.

Dr Soundy’s legacy of health and caring will live on in the many thousands of patients who benefitted from his care throughout his career. He will be sorely missed, and we will continue to uphold the same high standards in quality primary healthcare services that he represented as a paragon of patient centred care.

On a national scale, local doctors make a big health impact

“A veritable army of general practitioners – from Rustenburg to Ladysmith, Vredendal to Kariega and everywhere in between – is working to provide quality healthcare affordably throughout South Africa. National HealthCare Group’s growing network of GPs is providing a reliable and caring service in rural and urban areas, catering for the health needs of local communities and often bringing their own unique character to their vocation.”

Patrick Lubbe, Chief Executive Officer, National HealthCare Group

With a total surface area of 1.2-million square kilometres, South Africa is vast. Except for Russia, it dwarfs the nations of Europe. This brings a certain complexity to the provision of quality healthcare. Ensuring that people have access to reliable healthcare and that it is not prohibitively expensive, requires a solid, geographically diverse general practitioner network.

Last year National HealthCare Group grew its contracted network of general practitioners (GP), pharmacies, radiologists, pathologists, and other healthcare service providers substantially. With a 12 000-strong national network of healthcare practitioners, healthcare is becoming more accessible and more affordable than ever, driving better health outcomes.

The practice of Dr De Villiers, one of National HealthCare’s contracted GPs, is at the heart of the community in Rustenburg’s central business district. “Everyone needs a doctor, and we are proud that so many people from all walks of life, including from the mining community and those living in the surrounding rural areas, entrust us with their greatest asset – their health,” comments Dr De Villiers.

Well-known for his holistic approach to caring for his patients, Dr De Villiers is so committed to the community he serves that he commutes from Pretoria every day, 140km each way, to Rustenburg. Here he leads a friendly practice with a small staff who have come to know many of the town’s families over the years.

“It is important to me to apply my medical knowledge to take care of the health of my patients by providing a quality service, and hopefully, make a positive difference to people’s lives every day. When you become part of a community like Rustenburg, it is not an inconvenience to travel so far to work – it is a labour of love,” Dr De Villiers says.

“Not all patients can afford medical aid, such as the lower-income mine workers however, it is still possible to provide for most of their common health needs at primary healthcare level and make a significant difference to their wellbeing.”

A family man with a passion for dogs, Dr De Villiers’ had a practice in Mabopane before relocating to Rustenburg with his late wife.

With contracted providers such as Dr De Villiers forming a national footprint of locally respected, highly accessible healthcare practitioners, employers can now provide for the health needs of their staff members, no matter where they are based. In terms of workforce productivity, quality individual medical attention in the private setting more than pays for itself, and the National HealthCare Group have been able to develop highly cost-effective solutions to answer the needs of large corporate clients.

Over and above the primary healthcare provider network, the National HealthCare Group specialist network now includes a growing number of obstetricians, cardiologists, ophthalmologists, paediatricians, urologists, physicians, general surgeons, and pulmonologists across South Africa.

New healthcare models such as that offered by National HealthCare Group extends the benefits of first world healthcare delivery and systems, in a manner that suits our local context. Even within a country as vast as ours, with a strong national footprint of providers, it is possible to ensure access to quality private healthcare that is cost-effective enough to be within the reach of any employer.