

# CareCross Group Turns a Healthy 13

The CareCross Group has turned 13 years old this year. It is indeed a far cry from the humble beginnings in 1998 when founder Dr Reinder Nauta contacted the first GPs to become part of what would turn into the largest capitated provider network in southern Africa.

With the now familiar logo on more than 1000 GP practices, CareCross has stuck to its vision of offering 'quality health care you can afford'. Millions of patient visits have been made possible through the partnership approach between participating GPs and CareCross.

The group has reinvented itself and has diversified into several health care sectors. On the provision side, it owns Occupational Care South Africa. It also owns the provider network



The CareCross board, From left to right Dr Nhlamhla Mabaso, Mark Mawman, Keely Stevenson, Ian Black (chair) Dr Eveline Schurink, Yaseen Bhayat and Dr Reinder Nauta

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1. Department of Health. Database of medicine prices [Internet] 2011 [cited 18 April 2011].

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ONECARE, focusing very successfully on designated service provider contracts. More than 1500 specialists and 3000 GPs are the core of this network. On the pharmaceuticals side, the company has acquired Akacia Healthcare (formerly Thebe Pharmaceuticals) that is headed up by Yaseen Bhayat. According to Bhayat, the company has brought several new products to the South African market in recent months, including, Lozaan, the first 100mg angiotensin receptor antagonist plus diuretic.

Group chairperson Ian Black (who teamed up with Dr Nauta two years after he started CareCross) said, "Affordability is a need that stretches across all facets of health care and with the synergies between our providers and our products, we aim to be champions of that cause."

With the corporate head office in Newlands, Cape Town, and the headquarters of Akacia Healthcare in the newly-acquired Roche plant in Isando, Johannesburg, the group has a national presence.

With a turnover just shy of a R1bn per annum, it can look back at a very successful period in difficult times during the last 13 years. A substantial shareholding by BEE partners UFF (funded by Future Growth), and Soweto GP group First Care, makes CareCross a truly South African company that is fully committed to transformation. Approximately 8% of the company was bought in 2010 by a Swiss investment group, which heralds the beginning of international interest in CareCross.

With National Health Insurance (NHI) a certainty in the near future, the CareCross Group has positioned itself to be a certain partner when the need for provider contracting and capitation arises. Dr Nauta, who has worked in the UK National Health System (NHS) as well as in the Red Cross Children's Hospital before he started CareCross, is cautiously optimistic about the future of health care in SA.

"What we cannot afford is to alienate our GPs, and force them into a system that has no perceived or real value for them," he stated. "We have learned that only through mutual respect and a partnership approach, will doctors come to the table to ensure affordable health care solutions."

Nauta and his team have spearheaded capitation in SA, and have most of the leading medical schemes as their clients today. Modern and custom-designed IT infrastructure, dedicated staff and the ethos of sustainability have turned CareCross into one of SA's biggest success stories in managed care.



A typical CareCross practice