



LA Health | 2nd Edition Newsletter

2024

Prioritise your health this Winter

July is Mental Health Awareness Month. Depression is rising drastically among our members, and it can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race or ethnicity, income, culture or education. We'd like to support our members who may be struggling or know someone who is struggling with a mental health condition. In this edition of our quarterly newsletter, we include important information about our benefits and wellness programmes to support you through this difficult journey.

It is equally important to protect your physical health through these cold months. Read our newsletter to learn tips to help you keep fit and healthy this winter.

We'd like to thank you for actively participating in our 2024 Board of Trustees elections. Your engagement and commitment to shaping our Scheme are truly appreciated. We are pleased to announce the newly elected trustees. Read our newsletter to find out who you elected to protect your interests.

Regards

A de Koker
Principal Officer



Mental Health Awareness Month 2024

As we step into July, we embrace Mental Health Awareness Month with a sense of purpose and compassion.

At LA Health Medical Scheme, we recognise the profound impact that mental health has on our lives, our families and our communities. It's time to break down barriers, dispel myths and foster understanding about mental health conditions.

ONE IN THREE SOUTH AFRICANS FACE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Did you know that one in three South Africans struggle with a mental health disorder? This includes men, women and children, and could be someone close to you like a family member, employee, colleague or friend. These conditions can manifest in various ways, affecting our emotional wellbeing, relationships and overall quality of life.

The most common mental health conditions are:

1. **Depression:** A persistent feeling of sadness, loss of interest and hopelessness.
2. **Anxiety:** Intense worry, fear and apprehension that can interfere with daily functioning.
3. **Substance abuse:** The misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances as a coping mechanism.
4. **Bipolar disorder:** Characterised by extreme mood swings between depression and mania.

TREATMENT AND SUPPORT

The good news is that these conditions are treatable. Identifying the problem and seeking help early can make a significant difference. LA Health is committed to supporting our members on their mental health journey. Here's how:

- Screening benefits: Regular screenings are essential for early detection. Our members have access to screenings through their available **WELLTH Fund** that can identify mental health concerns promptly. For more information check our [wellness page](#).
- Benefits for certain mental health conditions, including alcohol and drug rehabilitation.

ACCESSING YOUR BENEFITS

1. **Consult your Premier Plus GP:** Reach out to your designated Premier Plus GP for guidance. They are equipped to address your mental health concerns.
2. **Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMBs):** As per regulations, PMBs cover the diagnosis, treatment and care of certain mental health conditions.

RECOGNISING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Be aware of common signs and symptoms:

- Persistent sadness or mood changes
- Anxiety, panic attacks or excessive worry
- Changes in sleep patterns or appetite
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Substance use or abuse

BREAKING THE STIGMA

We understand that there's still a stigma around mental health diagnoses. But remember, mental health conditions can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, income, culture or education. Let's normalise conversations about mental health and encourage seeking help without judgement.

TOGETHER, LET'S PRIORITISE MENTAL WELLBEING

At LA Health, we believe that mental health is everyone's concern. Let's create a supportive environment where seeking help is a sign of strength. Remember, you are not alone – our community stands with you.

Stay well, stay connected and let's break the silence around mental health.



Winter Blues and the Flu...

Flu vaccine

As winter approaches in South Africa, so does the annual influenza (flu) season. While many people associate the flu with mild symptoms that resolve on their own, it's essential to recognise that for some individuals, the flu can be a serious and potentially deadly illness. In this article, we'll explore why getting a flu vaccine is crucial and who should consider vaccination.

UNDERSTANDING THE FLU

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It spreads easily from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Symptoms typically include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, fatigue and sometimes nausea.

For most healthy individuals, recovering from the flu involves a few days of discomfort and mild symptoms.

However, certain groups are at higher risk of severe illness or complications:

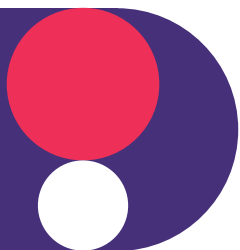
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic medical conditions
- Immunocompromised people (those with weakened immune systems due to medical treatments or underlying conditions)
- Elderly individuals

ACCESSING THE FLU VACCINE

LA Health provides access to the flu vaccine through basic screening benefits at the Scheme's designated service providers (DSPs).

TIMING MATTERS

While the ideal time to get vaccinated is before the end of April, it's not too late if you've missed that window. The vaccine remains effective throughout the winter season (April to August). Don't hesitate – protect yourself and those around you by getting vaccinated. Getting a flu vaccine is a proactive step toward safeguarding your health and preventing the spread of influenza.



Keeping fit and healthy during the winter months



Staying fit and exercising during winter is crucial for maintaining overall health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity boosts immunity, enhances mood, manages weight, supports cardiovascular health, and maintains bone density. Here are some tips to help you prioritise your health this winter.

EMBRACE SEASONAL WINTER FOODS.

Enjoy fruits like grapefruit, kiwifruit, mandarins, and oranges that are in season during winter. These provide essential vitamins and nutrients to support your health.

STAY HYDRATED.

Even in colder weather, it's crucial to drink enough water. Proper hydration helps maintain overall health and supports your immune system.

PRIORITISE SLEEP.

Adequate sleep is essential for a strong immune system. Aim for seven to nine hours of quality sleep each night.

EAT NUTRITIOUS MEALS.

Focus on a balanced diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, lean protein and whole grains. Limit foods high in added sugar and unhealthy fats.

EXERCISE REGULARLY.

Staying active is crucial. Even if it's too cold to go outside, consider indoor workouts or online fitness classes. LA Health members have access to world-class wellness programmes, so explore those options.

BUNDLE UP AND GET MOVING.

Don't let the cold weather keep you indoors all the time. Bundle up and take a walk, hike or engage in other physical activities when the weather permits.

WASH YOUR HANDS.

Good hand hygiene is essential year-round. Wash your hands frequently to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses, especially because winter is flu season in South Africa.

Remember, staying fit and healthy during winter requires a holistic approach. Prioritise your wellbeing, make positive lifestyle changes and stay active. If you're an LA Health member, explore our **wellness programmes** to enhance your health journey.



Health 2024 Election Results

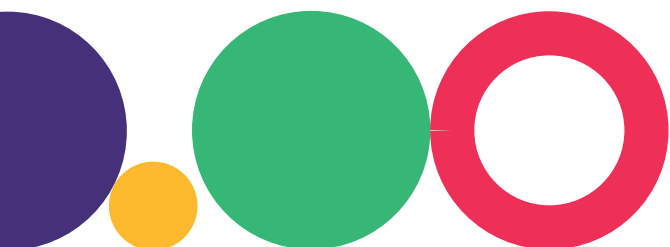
We'd like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who actively participated in the 2024 election process for the LA Health Board of Trustees. Your engagement and commitment to shaping the future of our medical scheme are truly commendable.

Without further ado, let's announce the results! We wish to congratulate and welcome the following individuals:

1. Reuben Denge
2. Mavela Alford Velamuva Dlamini
3. Anastacia Daphne Joseph
4. Gladys Maria Komapi
5. Arno Vorster

Remember, the Board of Trustees are here to serve you, our members. They will manage the Scheme in your best interests and work tirelessly to uphold the values of LA Health Medical Scheme.

Thank you once again for your active participation. Together, we'll continue to build a healthier, more resilient community.





We're in it for
your health

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