

BY TAI CHISHAKWE



World-class managed healthcare...

Providence Healthcare Risk Managers – a local success!

What started as a modest vision to provide excellent medical aid management services to the industrial and business community of the Eastern Cape more than a decade ago is now one of the province's most remarkable business success stories.

Established in 1992, Port Elizabeth-based Providence Healthcare Risk Managers has grown over the past 21 years into a fully-integrated health risk management services provider with more than 130 employees (an annual payroll of R25 million) and manages the healthcare benefits of more than 150 000 people across South Africa.

"Over the years, we managed to consistently attract small and big companies and now manage their medical aid schemes. We have focused on certain niche markets including mining (gold and platinum) and the manufacturing sector in the Eastern Cape and these industries, particularly gold, were less affected by the recession," said Chairman Donald Alexander.

While clients such as Continental Tyre, Coca Cola, Welfit Oddy, Shatterprufe and Rhodes University have been with Providence for more than 10 years, from 2010 onwards the company managed to sign-up some of the country's big mining houses including Harmony Gold, Impala Platinum and Northam Platinum.

The company now manages six medical schemes including Minemed, Suremed Health, Impala Platinum and took over the management of the Gold Fields Medical Scheme for Gold Fields mine in 2005.

Since 1994, Providence has provided the best value for money healthcare security plan to members in the Nelson Mandela Bay area through the Medimed Medical Scheme which the company supports with administration and managed care services.

"The financial strength of Medimed – with reserve levels in excess of 100% of contributions versus the legislated requirement of 25%, the Medimed scheme has been able to continuously provide better benefits at a lower price than the main competitors' offerings" described Providence CEO Mike Neubert.

Attie Higgs, general manager of human resources at Continental Tyre had this to say; "Providence has managed the health care benefits for Continental Tyre for nearly 20 years. During this time, they have provided excellent service and outstanding value for money through Medimed medical scheme. The average annual increase over the past 10 years has been consistently lower than medical inflation as well as salary and wage increases, ensuring a stable and sustainable health care solution"



Clockwise from top: Mike Neubert, CEO of Providence; Professional Management Review Awards won by Providence in 2012; Retabile Lucas at work; The 130 employees of Providence outside their offices in Lutman Road, Richmond Hill.

As a crowning to Providence's successes to date, the company has received its fair share of industry awards and recognitions.

"We have won the Professional Management Review (PMR) awards a few times now – the most recent was in 2012. We also previously won the PMR Diamond Arrow awards in the Best Large Managed Care Organisation category as well as the PMR Gold Arrow awards for Best GP and Specialist networks!" described Neubert.

He said the company's success was due to the dedication of its highly-experienced and skilled staff as well as the company's utilisation of cutting-edge IT to provide optimal and affordable healthcare risk management services to all their clients.

"We work with skilled healthcare professionals with specialised competencies and experience and are supported by reliable experts who include 14 qualified nurses, 2 specialised medical consultants, seven specialist pharmacists and an experienced social worker. We also enjoy the backing of a highly efficient IT team.

"Our senior management brings extensive experience and industry knowledge as well as strong accounting and financial management know-how in solving any of our clients' challenges," explained Neubert, adding "Our ratio of professional staff to beneficiaries covered is also excellent."

He said that Providence, which is an ISO 9001:2000-certified organisation, also benefits clients by maintaining a high standard of healthcare management services and keeping abreast with new trends through continuous staff improvement and training.

While companies at Providence's level of success usually would have migrated to Cape Town or Johannesburg, Neubert said serving all their clients from Port Elizabeth had its own advantages.

"Port Elizabeth is a great place to live and has easy to access markets in all the major centres of South Africa. We have very skilled people in PE and the cost of doing business from here is lower than in the big cities," he explained.

About the company's future, Neubert said Providence Healthcare Risk Managers will strive to continue growing in niche markets and serving all their clients with affordable fully-integrated health risk management services structured to meet each client's unique needs.

Establishing and managing a healthcare plan for a company can be a complex and daunting task. Find out how Providence Healthcare Risk Managers can provide your company with affordable and sustainable healthcare solutions by contacting Mike Neubert or Retabile Lucas on 041 395 4400 or via email info@providence.co.za.