

**Press Release:**

**COOPERATION BETWEEN DoH AND MEDICAL SCHEMES CRUCIAL TO IMPROVE CARE  
- BOARD OF HEALTHCARE FUNDERS CONFERENCE 2014**

26 August 2014; The Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) and the Department of Health (DoH) are considering working together in future to compile an Essential Drug List (EDL) for the different levels of care, as well as to conduct economic evaluations on healthcare products.

Speaking at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) Southern African Conference in Durban, the organisation's Managing Director, Dr Humphrey Zokufa, confirmed that representatives of the private healthcare funding industry have already been appointed on the government's EDL committees to ensure that there is consensus on the list of essential medicines that should be available to patients.

Dr Zokufa pointed out that a blueprint has also been compiled by the Department of Health on how it can partner with the private healthcare funding industry in conducting economic evaluations of products that will save both sectors time and money, as they will no longer have to repeat or duplicate these assessments. "The results of these evaluations won't be enforced but will be treated as an objective tool that can be used as a departure point for fairness in benefit design."

Referring to the failure to implement the Risk Equalisation Fund and continue with plans to introduce mandatory membership, owing to government's decision to rather implement a National Health Insurance system, as well as the negative effect this had on growing the membership of medical schemes, Dr Zokufa gave the assurance that these issues are being addressed.

"We don't want to position the BHF in such a way that it works against the waves of change, but rather works with it to ensure that decisions are going in the right direction. In doing so, the BHF will be in a position to see the oceans of opportunities ahead," said Dr Zokufa, urging the two sectors to build bridges that will enable them to work together, rather than increasing the tension caused by seeing themselves as two separate entities.

**Ends/**

**Editor's Notes:**

*The Board of Healthcare Funders of Southern Africa (BHF) is the representative body for the majority of medical schemes throughout South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.*

Please refer to the attached provisional conference programme for the full list of presentations.

**Issued by Epic Communications on behalf of The Board of Healthcare Funders of Southern Africa**