

# EMPLOYER NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2021



## DEAR EMPLOYER

We are pleased to bring you our last newsletter of 2021, a year which has seen many contrasts with the continuing devastation caused by the pandemic, yet also bringing hope to the world with the introduction of various vaccines, which have curbed the spread and effects of the virus. As previously iterated, Moto Health Care encourages individuals to be responsible and get vaccinated to do their part in restoring our country to normality. There is mounting evidence from other fully vaccinated countries, to suggest the death rate in infected individuals who have been vaccinated, have reduced.

The Scheme continued to perform well financially, and the result was that the Board and Scheme Management could once again introduce lower-than-industry-average increases for our members. The average increase across the Scheme is just **4.4%** compared to some of its competitor schemes in the industry.

In one of our previous newsletters, we highlighted the need for an individual/employer to choose an appropriate

benefit option for the benefit of their employees and focus areas such as hospitalisation, emergency cover and chronic medicine being the major areas where members needed to be adequately covered in. Moto Health Care currently boasts a total of seven options which offer tailor-made cover for all individuals. Furthermore, the Scheme boasts solvency levels that are in excess of the minimum requirement stipulated by the Council for Medical Schemes which indicates stability and peace of mind for your employees.

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**In this issue, we will look at how to cope in the workplace with a possible return to normality, as well as the Scheme's year-end information session process and option change deadlines. We hope you will enjoy the topics covered and, should you wish to see specific topics covered in future editions, please e-mail your suggestions to:**  
**[Eugene.eakduth@momentum.co.za](mailto:Eugene.eakduth@momentum.co.za)**

## RETURNING TO WORK AFTER COVID-19

Many businesses are requesting their employees to return to work as more individuals are vaccinated. For many individuals (especially in the motor industry), they don't have the luxury of working from home because their work requires them to be hands on. There is, however, still many administration and strategic services employees who are working from home.

This arrangement may well have continued for a little while longer, but recent problems with electricity and water supply, have caused companies to rethink their strategy especially with the amount of downtime their employees are experiencing. This then leaves the challenge of how to integrate these employees back into the office.



However, the fact is that employee engagement levels were in decline, simply because employees had too much on their plates with having to juggle personal, family, social and work commitments. Employees who may have previously coped with these stresses through work support structures, may have found themselves facing these challenges alone post Covid-19 because of remote working conditions. For many employers, remote working conditions may have been the final nail in the coffin for employee engagement, but there is some light at the end of the tunnel with these **helpful hints which can restore employee engagement levels.**



## Communication



**First and foremost, it is important to communicate to employees how they will be setup up upon returning to the office.** Naturally, they will not revert to the previous layout due to social distancing and if there are to be changes to desk and office layouts, affected staff should be communicated with, well in advance, so that they don't feel out of place when they return. Communication should also include clear guidelines on hot desk guidelines if staff attendance is to be rotated during certain periods.

Safety protocols, physical contact considerations as well as productivity expectations must be outlined from the very start as employees' performance may be affected, should they not feel entirely safe in a corporate setting again. Clients and suppliers will also need to be advised as to who is available onsite and from when so that deliveries and collections can be coordinated with the person's availability.

## Workplace movement, facilities and technology



The company should ensure that their facilities such as restrooms, canteens, pause areas and relaxation areas are fully and constantly sanitised and there is evidence of sanitising, such as a job sheet which is regularly filled in by cleaning staff. Desks and workstations should be spread out ergonomically whilst adhering to the recommended distance between individuals. **It is also recommended that the flow of people within the building be restricted** mostly to work related interactions.

**It is natural for colleagues who may have not seen each other for many months to catch up with each other, but remember that these interactions could lead to further infections,** especially for client facing staff who are interacting with back-office staff. Meeting room schedules should be available to all employees to view, so that they do not double book or overbook certain venues' capacity and beverage containers for teas and coffees should preferably be disposable.

**Technology support services should also be on standby to assist employees who are experiencing difficulty with their systems, in order to minimise downtime.** Many businesses are moving away from desktop computers to laptop units which give staff more flexibility to change workstations without the additional hassle of moving network cables and other items from one place to another.





## Health and safety

**Staff returning to work should be provided with the necessary personal protective equipment such as face masks, gloves and plexi-glass screens if they are attending to clients on a face-to-face basis.** The company should ensure that there are adequate sanitising stations available, which are regularly serviced. The company does not want a situation where staff do not have these items available, as it will present a health hazard to both employees and clients.



## Mental health and wellbeing

**Companies must take cognisance of the mental effects of COVID-19 especially for employees who have lost immediate family and whose families were affected negatively by loss of income.** This may lead to stress and anxiety for people returning to work for fear of infection and some employees may also feel pressurised into coming into the office to save their jobs. The company should allay these fears by providing adequate protection measures for their staff, as well as providing counselling through their employee assistance programmes.

Employees that are using public transport to get to work may also have fears of travelling and being exposed to the virus. The company could explore alternate transport methods such as ridesharing or providing a shuttle for staff. Employees may also not be able to cope with certain targets they were meeting prior to the pandemic, as a number of processes have since changed because of additional screening/hygiene steps. The company should be mindful of these developments and have open sessions with their employees, so that they feel included in decisions affecting their work. **As an example, tea and lunch breaks could be extended to allow for additional time to sanitise or put on protective wear.**

Employees that belong to a medical aid should be advised to also review their options to see what mental health benefits they qualify for. **Employees may not be aware that their specific medical aid option would cover them for mental health benefits, and this could mean they would receive help sooner rather than later.**

### DID YOU KNOW

MHC offers its members comprehensive mental health care benefits via dedicated patient care programmes. This programme gives members access to tools and benefits to monitor and manage their condition ensuring they get access to high quality and coordinated health care services. Call 0861 000 300 or log onto [www.mhcmf.co.za](http://www.mhcmf.co.za) for more information.



## Create a new normal

**Finally, staff that are returning to the office after an extended period should feel that they still work for a corporate organisation.** Many companies are foregoing year-end staff functions to avoid super spreader situations, but there is nothing stopping an employer from hosting its function at departmental level so that there are not too many people in a confined setting. This gesture would convey a message of responsible caring from the company's side, whilst allowing employees to enjoy a well-earned break from the pressure of their daily routines.



# THE LAST WORD

**The Scheme reminds employers that the process for option changes will remain the same for this year.** Employees wishing to change their options must first consult their respective HR offices before choosing another option. This is to ensure that the company is aware of the option change and will fund their portion of the contribution, as agreed in their contract with the employee. Some employers will only subsidise certain options, so it is important for staff to always clear their option choice with the employer first. Option change forms must also reflect the company stamp (where applicable) before being submitted. Employers who utilise the services of a broker need to verify with their respective brokers what their preference is for the submission of option change forms. Companies that do not utilise a broker may submit their option change forms directly to the Scheme at the following email address: **membership@mhcmf.co.za**

Should employers prefer to fax their option change forms to the Scheme, the fax number is **031 5800478**. Please remember to include the employee's membership number on the option change form. **The deadline for option changes is 15h December** but it is always better to send these requests through by the first week in December, as many companies do close around mid-December.

Year-end information sessions are currently also under way. Should your company require a presentation, kindly contact us on **0861 000 300** or email us at **info@mhcmf.co.za** and one of our consultants will contact you to set up an appointment. Please note that some of our sessions may be virtual sessions in order to curb the spread of COVID-19, but you can rest assured that you will receive all the necessary information packaged in a user-friendly format.

As we wind down with 2021, remember to take time to reflect on all of the things we have to be grateful for. The start of this year may have been out of our control, but through positivity and perseverance, we are able to end the year on our terms.

The Board of Trustees and Scheme Management of Moto Health Care would like to extend our best wishes to all our loyal employers for supporting the Scheme and look forward to welcoming you all into 2022. **Stay blessed and safe!**

