**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME AND CLICKS STRENGTHEN THEIR PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE THROUGH MEDSHIELD’S SMARTCARE BENEFITS**

**JOHANNESBURG; 10 NOVEMBER 2023 – Medshield Medical Scheme, a prominent medical aid scheme, and Clicks, a leading retail pharmacy chain and Designated Service Provider on the Medshield Pharmacy and SmartCare Networks, are pleased to announce the expansion and enhancement of their partnership. This partnership aims to empower members with even greater access to quality care through Medshield’s SmartCare benefit, allowing access to a network of Clicks clinics for professional nurse and nurse-led virtual Family Practitioner (GP) consultations. This further cements their commitment to delivering healthcare excellence through technology.**

**Expanding the SmartCare Network**

Medshield and Clicks have partnered to add 123 Clicks clinics to the existing 255 clinics in the SmartCare Network. This expansion guarantees that Medshield members can conveniently and efficiently access their SmartCare benefits at these selected Clicks clinics.

**SmartCare: The Gateway to Modern Healthcare**

Medshield's flagship member benefit, SmartCare, is leading the charge in digital innovation in healthcare. By utilising the power of technology, SmartCare provides access to pharmacy clinics that offer a one-stop-shop for members to access professional nurse consultations, health risk assessments, sick notes, specialist referrals, medication and nurse-led virtual access to Family Practitioners (GP) when required. This benefit is redefining the way healthcare services are accessed and delivered, making it more convenient and efficient for both healthcare providers and members.

Medshield members have access to an unprecedented level of convenience through Clicks clinics, which are powered by the Udok telemedicine solution. These consultations cover prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, focusing on connecting patients, nurses, doctors, and medication for fast and convenient care.

Kevin Aron, Principal Officer at Medshield, explains, "When we introduced SmartCare, we aimed to offer a cutting-edge solution that would add more value for our members. Medshield was the pioneer medical scheme in South Africa to integrate this service as a new benefit for all members, without additional costs."

**The Medshield SmartCare Benefit**

SmartCare offers a multitude of benefits to Medshield members, providing them with a holistic approach to healthcare:

* **Enhanced Access to Care:** SmartCare provides Medshield members with easy access to quality care led by professional, licensed nurses at pharmacy clinics. The nurse will facilitate a virtual Family Practitioner (GP) consultation depending on the patient’s ailment. Once the patient has been diagnosed and treatment prescribed, the relevant medication is easily obtained from the pharmacy.
* **Stretch day-to-day medical aid benefits:**  Healthcare services offered by SmartCare pharmacy clinics such as Clicks are cost-effective, and enable members to receive quality care and their medication as a complete solution. Utilising the SmartCare benefits allows the member to receive quality care whilst minimising the use of their day-to-day benefit.
* **Improved Health Outcomes:** SmartCare services implemented by pharmacy providers allow members to manage and receive preventative care through wellness checks and health risk assessments, providing access to early intervention services and ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

**The Vision of Collaboration**

"We are excited to announce our enhanced partnership with Clicks, a valued partner on the Medshield DSP Network. With the addition of 123 Clicks clinics to the SmartCare Network, we are reinforcing our commitment to provide Medshield members with access to high-quality healthcare services," said Kevin Aron, Principal Officer at Medshield. "SmartCare is revolutionising healthcare delivery, and we are proud to offer this innovative solution to our members."

**The Medshield SmartCare way of adding value:**

* A Medshield member can visit any Clicks clinic on the SmartCare network for primary healthcare needs such as acute conditions, wellness checks, health risk assessments, vaccinations, or chronic medication prescriptions as prescribed by a Family practitioner (GP).
* A registered nurse performs a thorough medical history and examination of the patient.
* The nurse can advise the patient on over-the-counter medication available at the pharmacy.
* A virtual consultation with a family practitioner is requested by the nurse through Clicks clinic’s Udok technology when further treatment is necessary. The doctor then completes the consultation with the assistance of the nurse.
* The nurse can print the doctor's written documentation, and the patient can fill their prescription at the pharmacy immediately.

**Accessible Medications and Comprehensive Care**

In addition to SmartCare consultations, Clicks pharmacies are available on all Medshield plans, making access to prescription medication convenient for members.

Rachel Wrigglesworth, Clicks' Chief Healthcare Officer stated, "This partnership between Clicks and Medshield focuses on the wellbeing of our customers, which is our top priority. The collaboration has expanded to include Clicks clinics powered by Udok, a solution that offers real-time access to registered family practitioners through our Nurse-led consultations on the SmartCare benefit, funded by Medshield Medical Scheme. As a leader in the healthcare market, this partnership perfectly aligns with our commitment to increasing access to affordable primary healthcare for all South Africans. We are committed to the continued success of this collaboration."

**Embracing the Future of Healthcare**

As the healthcare industry continues to evolve in the digital age, SmartCare stands as a shining example of how technology and innovation come together to provide added convenience and efficiency in healthcare. It empowers nurses to provide additional care for Medshield members through accessible technology. Unless it is a trauma situation, members can visit a Clicks clinic on the SmartCare network for acute and chronic conditions. By embracing the future of healthcare through the SmartCare benefit, Medshield members can expect to experience efficient and reliable medical consultations to enhance their wellbeing.

"Medshield is continuing to reinvent healthcare the smart way. The SmartCare benefit offers our members a new level of convenience, connecting members with nurses, doctors and medicine like never before," concluded Aron.

**A Strengthened Partnership**

Expanding the Medshield and Clicks partnership demonstrates a solid commitment to providing excellent healthcare services and a shared vision of creating a more accessible and convenient healthcare experience for Medshield members. It is a testament to the excellent collaboration between Medshield and Clicks, ensuring that quality care is always easily accessible.

**FIN**

(961 words)

**EDITORS NOTES**

**FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS**

* Stone issues this release on behalf of the Medshield Medical Scheme.
* For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact Willem Eksteen, CEO of Stone or a media liaison member of the Stone team at media@stone.consulting / 011 447 0168
* Alternatively, contact Lilané Swanepoel at Medshield at 010 597 4982 / lilanes@medshield.co.za

**MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2024 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2024 Product Page on the Medshield website at <https://medshield.co.za/>. You can review the benefit adjustments and value adds and download the 2024 benefit guides

* **PremiumPlus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a comprehensive Personal Savings Account and extended Above Threshold Cover.
* **MediBonus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the independence to manage daily healthcare expenses through a substantial Day-to-Day Limit.
* **MediSaver** is perfect for independent individuals and young professionals thinking about expanding their families. MediSaver offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a generous Personal Savings Account.
* **MediPlus** provides middle to upper-income families with complete healthcare cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a generous Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical in both categories, Prime and Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediPlus Compact.
* **MediCore** is ideal for healthy individuals looking for comprehensive hospital cover, with daily healthcare expenses self-managed. This option offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at Medshield Private Tariff 200%. Day-to-day healthcare expenses are self-funded.
* **MediValue - Prime and Compact** - is the ideal option for growing families. It offers affordable cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a sizeable Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical on both options, MediValue Prime and MediValue Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediValue Compact.
* **MediSwift** is the ideal hospital plan for active, healthy individuals. Major medical emergency and In-Hospital treatment are covered up to R1 million per family in the Compact Hospital Network, with the added benefit of day-to-day treatment for non-professional sports injuries. As a hospital plan, MediSwift offers no Day-to-Day benefits, allowing members the freedom to self-manage their daily healthcare expenses.

**ABOUT MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME**

* Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute towards the fund monthly to cater for medical cover should the need arise.
* Medshield has been in operation since 1968, making us one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and reliable medical schemes in South Africa. Our extensive experience in the healthcare sector guides our understanding of our members' needs. Our excellent cover and benefits combined with the best quality systems and services have resulted in our exceptional size and strength.
* Each of our options offers affordably priced benefits. We continuously review and improve the range of benefits in each option to bring you what you need.
* Our impeccable reputation of prompt payments to hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and other medical caregivers guarantees approval from service providers when you present your Medshield membership card.
* Our extensive partner networks place us in the perfect position to offer exceptionally competitive rates to our members.
* Medshield is well-represented throughout all nine provinces and provides seamless access to service providers in your area. Our geographical spread provides convenience if it becomes necessary for you to have a personal discussion with one of our experienced consultants. We also have a streamlined online claim submission system and immediate contact centre assistance, making it easier to manage your membership and claims from the convenience of your home or office.
* Our extensive range of additional benefits and services is another distinguishing factor. Our benefits and services have been designed to give members additional support when they need it most, for instance, in an emergency or when suffering from a chronic or life-threatening condition.
* Compared with other medical schemes, our trustworthiness, impeccable history, and exceptional service guarantee that we come out tops!