

Press release – 14 April 2011

Private acute mental healthcare facility opened in Benoni

Responding to the increasing demand for private services in the specialised field of mental health, Life Healthcare has opened an 80 bed dedicated mental health facility in Benoni at the beginning of April, making mental health services more accessible to East Rand and surrounding communities.

Built at a cost of R32 million, Life Glynnview was specifically designed and decorated in order to create a therapeutic environment conducive to the recovery of users admitted to the facility. It houses private and semi-private rooms, and wards with observation facilities for users in need of a higher level of psychiatric care. There are also individual and group therapy rooms, an electro-convulsive therapy unit, lounges, a gym and recreation facility, TV and dining rooms, courtyards and private gardens.

Worldwide, and also in South Africa, there is a growing need for mental healthcare services. For example, according to the World Health Organisation, depression alone is likely to be the single highest contributor to global burden of disease by 2030 – more so than heart disease, stroke, road traffic accidents, and HIV/AIDS.

Life Glynnview specialises in the treatment of psychiatric disorders, including substance dependence or other addictions that are associated with these disorders. Persons affected by mood and anxiety disorders, personality disorders or psychotic disorders are treated through short term programmes during their stay at the facility. These programmes were designed to provide comprehensive and holistic treatment in order to facilitate recovery.

An intervention programme aimed at assisting users whose functioning has become impaired either as a result of their dependency on psychoactive substances or any other addiction associated with their psychiatric disorder, is also offered. It is aimed at breaking the cycle of addiction through detoxifying the user whilst implementing an intensive cognitive behavioural psychotherapy programme in order to interrupt the cycle of addiction and foster ongoing abstinence.

“The treatment programmes offered at Life Glynnview has been developed to achieve optimal outcomes through the short term treatment of mental healthcare users admitted to the facility,” says Jakes Scholtemeyer, who manages both Life Glynnview and Life The Glynnwood.

The interdisciplinary team of medical, therapy and nursing professionals involved in the treatment and care of users, reflects the holistic approach to mental healthcare at Life Glynnview. The team includes psychiatrists, a neurologist, a general practitioner, psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and mental health nursing practitioners offering 24 hour care and support. The team members who will be involved in the treatment and care of users could vary, as this is tailored to the needs of each specific user.

A dedicated aftercare programme has been developed to monitor and support mental healthcare users for a period of 12 months after their discharge. During this time social workers offer individual follow-up and support on a weekly or monthly basis, depending on the user's need. Users are also encouraged and assisted to identify and join appropriate support groups.

Life Healthcare is the biggest provider of private acute mental healthcare in South Africa. "In line with the group's organic growth strategy, we are expanding our acute mental health services. By early 2012, Life Healthcare will operate 350 dedicated private acute mental health beds in South Africa," says managing director of Life Healthcare, Michael Flemming, "We are also one of the first private providers of acute mental healthcare in South Africa to operate beds for assisted and involuntary users, in addition to catering for voluntary users".

Life Healthcare currently provides mental healthcare at six dedicated facilities, namely in Gauteng at the newly opened Life Glynnview in Benoni, Life Riverfield Lodge in Nietgedacht (north west of Johannesburg) and Life New Kensington Clinic in Johannesburg; in the Eastern Cape at Life St Mark's Clinic in East London and Life Huntersraig Hospital in Port Elizabeth; and in KwaZulu Natal at the Annex at Life Entabeni Hospital in Durban. The latter beds will be relocated to Nazareth House across the road from the hospital and expanded to 100 beds; 80 of which will become operational later this year, with 20 more beds being added in 2012. The group also plans to open another dedicated mental health facility in Gauteng towards the end of 2011.

Life Healthcare – an overview

Life Healthcare is a JSE main board listed company operating 64 acute care hospitals and sameday surgical centres (including a minority shareholding in seven facilities), with a comprehensive geographic spread in seven South African provinces and Botswana. Its hospitals and same day surgical centres offer access to 308 operating theatres, 664 ICU beds, 316 high care beds, 40 emergency units, 35 maternity units, 12 cardiac units, 6 dedicated acute mental health facilities, 4 dedicated renal dialysis units, 43 radiology units and 7 fertility units.

Through Life Rehabilitation, the Life Healthcare group is also the leading provider of private acute, outcomes-driven physical and cognitive rehabilitation for patients disabled by stroke, brain or spinal trauma and other disabling injuries, in six dedicated Life Rehabilitation units spread throughout Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Free State. A seventh unit is due to open in Cape Town in September this year. Life Rehabilitation has expanded its services and now also offers inpatient pulmonary, orthopaedic and paediatric rehabilitation, the latter at dedicated paediatric facilities at Life New Kensington Clinic and Life Entabeni Hospital.

Life Occupational Health is the country's leading provider of contracted, on-site occupational and primary healthcare services to employer groups in commerce, industry, mining, parastatals and a government prison, operating 283 on-site clinics taking care of over 154 000 employees' healthcare needs.

The group is also involved in the oldest and largest public/private healthcare partnership in South Africa through its subsidiary, Life Esidimeni, which operates 12 facilities under contract to provincial government health and social welfare departments.

Eleven of these facilities provide long term care for mental health and frail patients. The other hospital provides acute care to indigent patients.

Life Healthcare is also directly involved in the training of nurses with the Life College of Learning established 13 years ago. The college is accredited with the Department of Education, the Council for Higher Education and Umalusi (the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training) and has 10 learning centres and three classrooms across South Africa.

In support of the Life Healthcare group's corporate social investment efforts, the company has also established the Life Healthcare Foundation which is a managed trust providing resources and initiatives aimed at improving the health and well-being of disadvantaged communities and individuals reflecting Life Healthcare's purpose of making life better for all.

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