

# Medihelp appoints new principal officer

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Medihelp, one of the five largest open medical schemes in South Africa, has appointed Varsha Vala as its new principal officer. She will take the reins from 1 March 2024.



Varsha Vala, who is currently a leading executive for digital and managed care at Professional Provident Society (PPS), started her career as a pharmacist. She has more than 25 years' experience in health insurance, managed care, and design thinking. Her career highlights include several industry firsts in managed care, such as implementing the country's first integrated managed care solution based on risk stratification and a holistic health and well-being model.

Says Chris Klopper, chairperson of the Medihelp Board of Trustees: "We are delighted to welcome Varsha to the Medihelp team. She has the experience and skills the scheme requires now and into the future. Effectively managing claims ratios is an industry-wide challenge. Varsha's in-depth understanding of health insurance and the pharmaceutical and wellness industry – and how to apply innovation to products, systems, and approaches – will add tremendous value in addressing this challenge. Her outcomes-focused approach has ensured excellent risk management for schemes to maintain a low claims ratio and improve solvency."

Vala believes leaders in managed healthcare must have a thorough understanding of their clients' needs, know how to navigate disruption, and be agile and innovative.

"Understanding the deep challenges that members face when accessing medical scheme benefits is a key passion and strength of mine. Many members feel vulnerable and stressed when faced with critical health conditions. This drives my commitment to enabling seamless integration of all stakeholder needs, supporting members in navigating the complex ecosystem, improving the member experience, and protecting the mutual funds of the scheme's members."

According to Vala, developing forward-thinking solutions and delivering outstanding client experiences with a human-centred approach is what keeps her up at night. And her strong strategic insights, multicultural communication skills, and the ability to foster and maintain authentic relationships are the vital capabilities that support her leadership.

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