



IN GOOD SHAPE

Blum Khan, CEO of Metropolitan Health, a subsidiary of MMI Holdings Limited, says the company aims to develop into new markets

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When Blum Khan talks about the new focus of MMI and its company Metropolitan Health, which he heads up as CEO, he emphasises values. 'People-centric and client-centric values are vital to the process that MMI wants to pursue as the group moves from its integrated approach over the past three years, into a new growth development phase.

'All our energies are directed at the huge opportunities that, for a large insurance house like Metropolitan, appear to be abundant.'

He is excited about what Metropolitan Health can do with the fantastic intellectual property (IP) that exists within the health care environment. Khan and his colleagues already have one answer to these opportunities – leverage MMI's IP into Africa and new jurisdictions.

'Understanding the trends that are emerging, we have already begun to invest in health care delivery and the provision of care with our acquisition of a majority stake in Hello Doctor (the call-in service) and our joint business venture with Alpha Pharm franchise group, where we are installing in-store primary care clinics within independent community pharmacies.'

Khan is upbeat about another great opportunity that MMI is looking at with Metropolitan Health. 'What is the value proposition that our business has in the National Health Insurance world?' Metropolitan Health already has experience in working with government.

The company was awarded the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) administration contract in SA about seven years ago and looks after about 690 000 families. Khan says the lessons they have learned during the GEMS contract created exciting opportunities for health care projects in the rest of Africa.

'Our sister company Metropolitan International already has a presence in 12 African countries and will be scaling up to

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offer health care administration services for government clients across the continent.

'Africa's health care demands are increasing as nations undergo development and there is a lot more visibility around needs. As economies improve, awareness and demands grow to bring about a form of health care consumerism that needs to be catered for. This is what MMI's client-centricity model is all about ... really understanding what the customer requires and providing products, services and advice that satisfy those demands or needs.'

Satisfying needs is something Khan understands well. He is a nomad at heart. After completing his CA(SA) qualification in Cape Town, he backpacked through a number of countries before settling in Australia. What was meant to be a short stint there saw him spend 12 years in the oil and gas industry in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney before returning home during SA's transition in the early 1990s.

Khan has worked for Metropolitan for over a decade, initially as its deputy CEO of Health Businesses. When the merger between Metropolitan and Momentum formed MMI Holdings, he was appointed CEO of Metropolitan Health in 2010.

He says he has a collaborative management style that fits well into the ethos of the group.

'I believe that to buy into the strategic direction of a business, you need to find and endorse points

of collaboration across not just one arm of the group, but all the divisions of the holding company. This may mean that you have to step away from your turf now and then. One of my personal mantras is that life isn't meant to be easy. Once you understand that, then you become exposed to the learnings and the acquisition of knowledge from others.'

Khan believes in collaboration. He says he is motivated to help develop young people based on his own experiences gained in senior positions at a young age.

'We all need to take more risks with the youth. Many don't even know what potential lies within them. They need help to realise dreams and negotiate the pitfalls in life.'

Speaking of dreams, Khan is determined to be part of the collaborative effort that needs to take place between the public and private health care sectors in the country.

'Can we please just set one goal for SA in terms of health care? With one business model, issues like skills shortages and funding can be effectively addressed, freeing up capacity and eliminating waste.'

'This is something that can be applied throughout Africa where I intend to work with MMI across borders to ensure improved health care continues to be a priority.' **JSE**