

# Netcare Limited

## Press release

### **Netcare recognises SA's nurses in pledge for support**

While they often work under the most difficult of conditions and their vital role in the field of health is not widely acknowledged, nurses are the 'backbone of the healthcare chain' and deserve so much more recognition than they get. "This is why I am pledging my full support to the nurses of this country," says Dr Richard Friedland, CEO of private hospital group Netcare.

He continues: "If we want to keep our nurses from leaving the country or the profession, it is vital that we provide them with sufficient incentives to stay, while affording them ample opportunity to develop professionally."

Friedland has pledged to help the country's nursing staff to reach their full potential and make use of the many opportunities that exist within the South African healthcare system. "I believe that our nurses, not just those working for Netcare but every nurse that has chosen to practice her profession in this country, have a passion to serve their fellow citizens. We are extremely appreciative for the contribution they make to the wellbeing of so many South Africans. Without them our country's hospitals and clinics would not be able to function."

Netcare is already doing its fair share to try and alleviate South Africa's nursing skills shortage which is beginning to reach crisis levels. In 2007 Netcare ranked 9<sup>th</sup> for skills development on South Africa's Top 200 companies' list. The group's overall cost of training in South Africa during the 2006/07 financial year was R100 million.

Eileen Brannigan, Group Director of Nursing at Netcare, says that the company is in effect the largest private nursing and paramedic training institution in the southern hemisphere. "We trained over 3 200 nurses

and some 500 paramedics in 2007. We also currently have more than 200 of our nurses enrolled for further studies in speciality areas, which offers them the opportunity to further their careers."

Like Friedland, Brannigan believes that it is essential to support and pay homage to nurses as the foundation on which clinical and patient care is built. "This is especially true in the South African setting, where nurses have a wide scope of practice and bear the brunt of increased patient loads and responsibilities due to the shortages of other health professionals such as doctors, physiotherapists, pharmacists and more."

She continues: "There is no denying that this skills shortage places a considerable burden on our nurses. The impact thereof can be felt by each nurse on every level of care and speciality area in our hospitals. As their workload increase their personal health and home lives often suffer as a result. Yet we are so immeasurably proud of their refusal to let it impact on clinical outcomes and patient care."

Florence Nightingale, on whose birthday we celebrate International Nurses Day, believed that when it comes to the provision of top level nursing care, it really does not matter where in the world or under what circumstances patients are being cared for. What really matters is the spirit in which that care is delivered to patients.

Almost 190 years since her birth modern healthcare systems still struggle with many of the same issues that she had fought for, such as infection control and respect for the nursing profession. "One thing that has evolved greatly is the opportunities that exist for nurses within the field of healthcare. Today nursing can be a highly specialised, highly rewarding career. We are able to make such a difference to the health and lives of the citizens of South Africa," says Brannigan.

Friedland comments that it is not only in their careers that opportunity lies abundant for South Africa's nurses and, in fact, all South Africans.

"Despite what is portrayed in the media and the negative sentiment that resides in our minds regarding the future of this incredible country, I believe that we are at a crossroads. We are at a point in time where partnerships with the public sector are actively being pursued. "

Friedland concludes: "In South Africa we can make a tangible difference to the lives of thousands of people. We hope that the support we grant our nurses will serve as a definite incentive for them to stay and practice their much needed skills in South Africa."

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**Released on behalf of Netcare  
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