

Value-based cancer care saves time, costs and lives

A strong relationship between Mediclinic SA and Icon Oncology aims to drive quality, affordable cancer care into the future.

“For a number of years we have been able to offer high-quality, affordable cancer treatment options by contracting with a network of expert oncologists across the country. Right now we work with about 80% of the best private oncologists in South Africa.”

Anthony Pedersen is the CEO of Icon Oncology South Africa, which has multiple affiliated chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment centres based at a variety of Mediclinic hospitals across South Africa. These centres provide a holistic approach to cancer care by focusing on value-based care – and a new partnership between Icon Oncology and Mediclinic aims to bring patients the best quality care at the most affordable price.

What is value-based care? “Over the years we have developed evidence-based cancer treatment protocols, drug formularies, a large footprint of facilities and lasting relationships with some of the best cancer doctors in SA,” says Pedersen. “Today, we are able to combine all of that into something quite unique: a streamlined, bundled fee pricing model that brings the best possible care to increasing numbers of patients.”

While fee-for-service reimbursement models typically compensate care providers for the number of procedures they perform for their patients, a value-based care model aims to accurately measure patient health outcomes and reimburse the doctors accordingly.

The result: a cancer treatment journey that is up to 27% more affordable than the usual fee-for-service model – but with superior outcomes.

“Instead of contracting with medical insurance providers to provide a service for a given fee, we partner with funders to measure and report on outcomes, and be rewarded for quality,” Pedersen explains. “This method prioritises the value of care, and puts the patient first.”

Icon Oncology’s cancer treatment centres are focused on achieving the best possible outcomes at the most affordable price by managing each cancer patient right from the point of diagnosis through the entire continuum of care. “We have developed evidence-informed protocols that empower doctors to give our patients a better experience: less confusing, administratively simpler, and emotionally more comfortable.”

Usually, once someone is diagnosed with cancer, they will follow a course of treatment over a number of years. This journey will encompass treatment from surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, pathologists and other specialists. Mediclinic facilities and Icon Oncology centres will bring together multidisciplinary teams to consider each case to decide on a coordinated and clear course of treatment.

Icon Oncology and Mediclinic work together to ensure a seamless patient experience. “A patient who embarks on a cancer recovery treatment plan requires a range of experts,” says Pedersen. That journey may start with their general practitioner, who may refer them to a surgeon for a biopsy, for example. They may need an oncologist and radiologist, further surgery, and courses of chemotherapy or radiotherapy. If those consultations and treatments are uncoordinated, they can be inefficient,” he says.

“The patient is at risk of wasting money on repeated tests, and wasting time they may not have. If you can streamline that process, by bringing together experts and interactions under one roof and with one goal in mind, you can improve their experience, control costs and improve the quality and efficiency of their care.”