

Confronting the diabetes tsunami

The Diabetes Alliance and the University of Pretoria Diabetes Research Centre (UP DRC) are presenting the country's inaugural South African Diabetes Summit on Wednesday 10th November 2021, ahead of World Diabetes Day on 14 November.



Source: ©World Diabetes Day worlddiabetesday.org

The goal of the summit is to address the diabetes crisis in SA and build a coordinated response as well as co-create and launch the country's first diabetes charter.

Build back better

By taking stock of the current diabetes situation and producing a Diabetes Charter, the summit will all interested parties to build back better in terms of the South African response to the diabetes epidemic.

Ahead of the Summit, collaborative work streams are working together to outline evidence-led challenges and propose solutions in five themes, based on the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Diabetes Compact.

Each theme tackles a different aspect of the diabetes problem in South Africa, from awareness and prevention to education, management and access to care, surveillance (data), innovation and research.

A growing epidemic

"We are all affected by this growing epidemic," explains Bridget McNulty, chairperson of the Diabetes Alliance.

“Every person in South Africa knows someone or has a family member living with diabetes, she says.

According to Stats SA Diabetes is the number one killer of women in South Africa, and the second leading cause of death in men.

McNulty adds that undiagnosed, untreated and uncontrolled diabetes is leading to serious complications.

“These impact people’s daily quality of life and burden the public and private healthcare sector. People with diabetes have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19 and many have died.”

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) says that one in two people with diabetes are undiagnosed, with two in three people in SA are at risk of prediabetes, according to the SA Demographic and Health Survey.

#IfNotNowWhen

“We have decided to act and confront the diabetes tsunami so that South Africa is never again found unprepared when facing a health challenge similar to the Covid-19 pandemic,” explains Dr Patrick Ngassa Piotie from UP DRC.

“We share the International Diabetes Federation call for action under the #IfNotNowWhen.”

University of Pretoria Diabetes Research Centre

The summit is also an opportunity to officially introduce the UP DRC as an advocate for sustainable, evidence-based and person-centered care for people living with diabetes in South Africa.

The centre will endeavour to improve the lives of South Africans living with diabetes through research and innovation.

The Diabetes Alliance includes organisations of people living with diabetes, research and tertiary institutions, healthcare providers, professional associations, pharmaceutical companies and NPO, all of whom are committed to improving the diabetes response in South Africa.

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