



# RESEARCH STUDY

## Funding of Oncology Benefits by Medical Schemes, South Africa: A focus on breast and cervix cancer

### BACKGROUND

In October 2022, the Council for Medical Schemes through its Policy Research and Monitoring Division published a research chapter *Funding of Oncology Benefits by Medical Schemes, South Africa: A Focus on Breast and Cervix Cancer*. Importantly, the research study was undertaken to examine breast and cervical cancer rates among South African medical schemes. The study went as far as analysing how medical schemes in South Africa funded breast and cervix cancers, including patient co-payments, and to identify funding gaps.

### RESULTS

The results showed that the relative proportion of beneficiaries with breast cancer was higher in open schemes than restricted, in large schemes than medium and small schemes, in comprehensive plans, Efficiency Discount Options (EDOs), and hospital plans than in partial cover plans, and in age bands older than 55 in and out of hospital settings than in in-hospital settings.

### CONCLUSION

The average expenditure for the two types of cancers differed by scheme type and was much higher in open schemes than in closed schemes, thus indicating the effect of setting. Cervical cancer was +/-R 10,000 more expensive than breast cancer per beneficiary. Partial cover plans paid around R25 000 for breast cancer compared to other benefit options, which paid around R40 000 per beneficiary region. EDOs and partial cover plans paid just under R40 000 for cervical cancer per beneficiary, while comprehensive and hospital plans paid just over R50 000.

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