

COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL SCHEMES

RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2026



Theme: Value-Based Care, Contracting, and Pricing Towards Universal Health Coverage

Submission deadline: 30 January 2026

Submission portal/email: researchsymposium@medicalschemes.co.za



Background and Rationale

South Africa's healthcare system is undergoing a significant transition toward achieving Universal Health **Coverage (UHC)**. As the financing and delivery landscape evolves, the need for evidence-driven approaches to healthcare purchasing, benefit design, and pricing has become more urgent. Globally, value-based models are gaining momentum as sustainable, outcomes-oriented alternatives to traditional fee-for-service structures.

In this context, **Value-Based Care (VBC)**, **Value-Based Contracting (VBCt)**, and **Value-Based Pricing (VBP)**, grounded in robust Health Technology Assessment (HTA), offer practical pathways to enhance efficiency, equity, and accountability in healthcare. These approaches have the potential to strengthen population health outcomes while ensuring responsible stewardship of limited financial resources.

The **Council for Medical Schemes (CMS)** invites researchers, policymakers, academics, healthcare professionals, and industry stakeholders to submit high-quality papers that contribute to the national discourse on value, outcomes measurement, pricing fairness, and sustainable healthcare contracting. This symposium aims to stimulate rigorous debate, share best practices, and showcase innovations that support evidence-based decision-making within the medical schemes environment and the broader health sector.

Conference Focus

The 2026 symposium will bring together thought leaders and experts to explore how value-based models can be designed, implemented, and scaled in South Africa. The programme will highlight empirical research, advanced analytics, policy innovations, and practical case studies demonstrating how value can be embedded across the healthcare value chain from benefit design to provider payment mechanisms and pricing policies.

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Sub-Themes

Authors are invited to submit abstracts under the following sub-themes:

1. HTA in Practice

Integrating evidence, ethics, and societal values into reimbursement decisions, benefit revisions, prioritisation, and coverage determinations.

2. Value-Based Care Models

Innovations in provider payment reform, quality measures, outcome-based performance management, and patient-centred service delivery models.

3. Value-Based Contracting

Performance-linked agreements, shared-risk financial models, and contracting innovations for pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and health technologies.

4. Value-Based Pricing

Approaches to linking price to value, including pharmacoeconomic evaluation, cost-effectiveness thresholds, reference pricing, and differential pricing.

5. Equity and Universal Health Coverage

Ensuring fair access, financial risk protection, and allocative efficiency; strategies to address inequities in coverage, utilisation, and health outcomes.

6. Digital Health and Data for Value

Leveraging digital platforms, big data analytics, AI, real-world evidence, and interoperable systems to strengthen value-based decision-making.

Who Should Submit?

- Researchers and academics
- Health economists and HTA experts
- Medical scheme professionals
- Policymakers and regulators
- Clinicians and provider organisations
- Pharmaceutical and MedTech innovators
- Students and emerging scholars
- Data scientists and digital health specialists

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RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2026 - P2

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Submission Guidelines

- **Abstract length:** Maximum 300 words
- **Format:** Structured abstract
 - o Background
 - o Methods
 - o Results
 - o Conclusions
- Submission deadline: 30 January 2026
- Submission portal/email: researchsymposium@medicalschemes.co.za
- Notification of acceptance: 15 February 2026
- Deadline for full paper: 06 March 2026
- Language: English
- Review process: Double-blind peer review.

Authors must ensure that submissions are original and have not been published elsewhere. All accepted abstracts will be included in the official symposium proceedings.

Important Information

- **Symposium Date:** April 2026
- **Publication Opportunities:** Selected papers may be considered for publication in CMS-affiliated research reports or partner academic journals.
- **Contact for Queries:** researchsymposium@medicalschemes.co.za