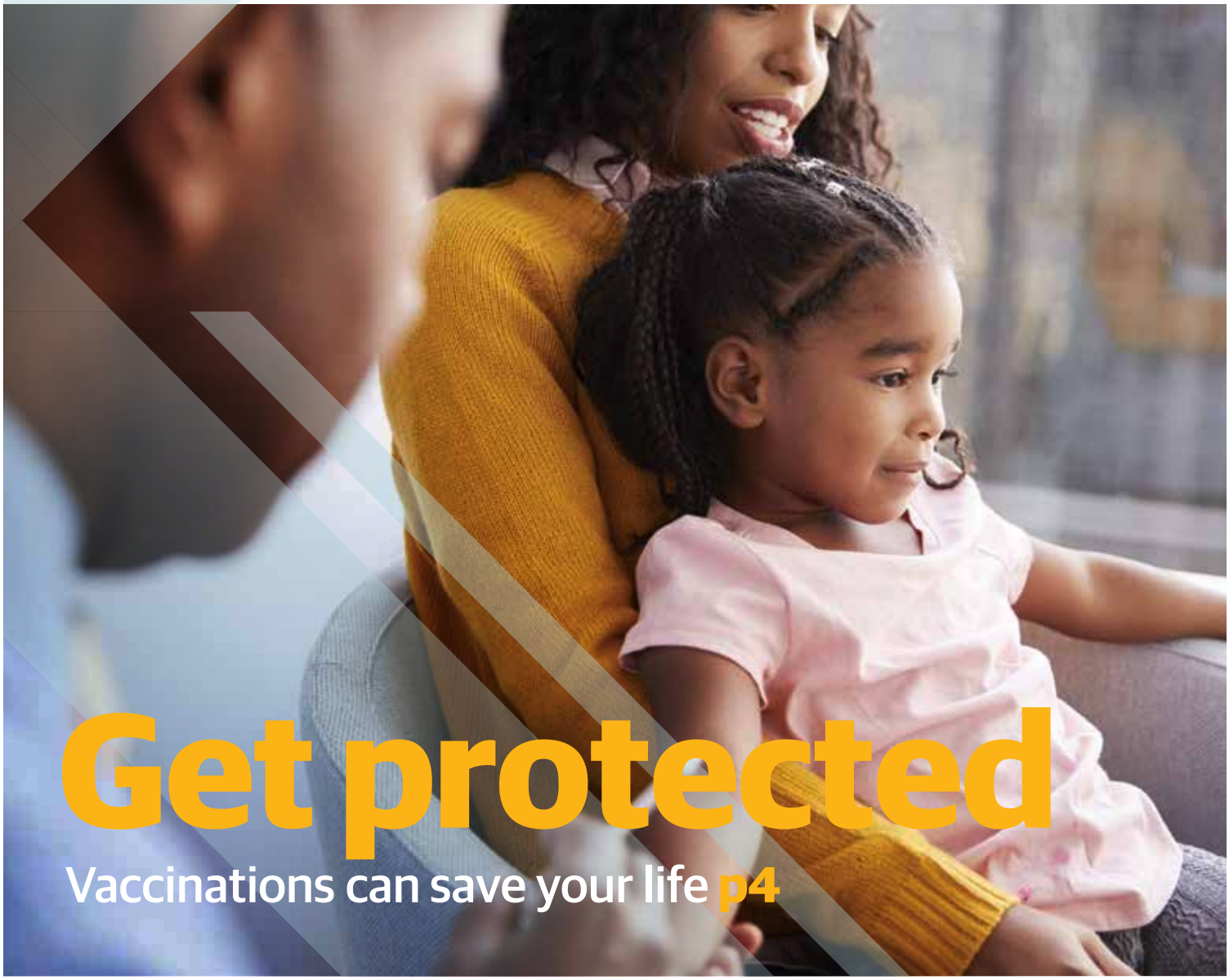
IN HEALTH

ISSUE 35



Get protected

Vaccinations can save your life p4

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?
An annual check-up is vital

SAY NO TO BURNOUT
Learn to manage your energy

DOWN SYNDROME
How much do you really know?

A Liberty publication

LIBERTY
In it with you

Welcome

Dear readers,

In this issue of *In Health* we share helpful information and tips on a range of topics to empower you to protect and maintain your and your family's health.

On this page, Liberty Health Divisional Director of Member Care, Dr Numaan Mohamood shares his experience of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Have you had your blood pressure tested lately? Find out why it's so important to do so, on page 3.

Vaccinations save lives! The evidence speaks for itself. Turn to pages 4 and 5 to understand how vaccines work, why they're vital, and what you're covered for.

Being overly busy is not something to be proud of. On page 6, we explore why we hit burnout and how we can put practices into place to prevent it.

On page 7, we explain why some people are born with Down syndrome, and the effect this has on their lives.

Want to help fight fraud? Get all the details on page 8.

Please share the health insights in this newsletter with your family, friends and colleagues. If you have suggestions for article topics or any other input on this newsletter, please send these to DG-LHH-Marketing@libertyhealth.net with "In Health" in the subject line. We welcome your feedback.

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Unit 11, 99 Lympleigh Road, Plumstead, 7800
+ 27 21 201 7370, info@bespokemedia.co.za.

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"I got my COVID-19 vaccination."

Divisional Director of Member Care, Dr Numaan Mohamood, reports back on his experience.

Tell us more! I had my vaccine administered at Groote Schuur Hospital (GSH) as part of the South African Sisonke Trial, and the process was extremely efficient.

Did you feel emotional? Yes, I had mixed emotions. I felt privileged, but also lucky to observe first-hand the work my GSH colleagues were doing to protect the lives of healthcare workers. The incredible efforts and sacrifices of all healthcare workers who have worked on the frontline throughout this pandemic should be celebrated.

Many people are worried about the safety of the vaccine and its potential side-effects. There is nothing to fear. Vaccines are not a new technology in medicine. Their success is centuries old. We know from experience that short-lived symptoms from vaccines, such as body aches or even fever, are signs that our immune system is working and creating the necessary immunity to recognise and combat the infection the next time it encounters it. I experienced mild symptoms – pain at the injection site and mild body aches and headaches for 24 hours. The fact that the COVID-19 vaccine came to market in record time is not a reason to doubt its efficacy or safety. Scientists across the globe collaborated, public and private sectors invested, trials were undertaken, and medical experts approved its safety and effectiveness. It has also been administered on a large scale in many developed countries. By choosing to be vaccinated, you not only protect yourself from the virus, but you protect your family, friends and anyone around you.

Spirit of Ubuntu The global pandemic has reminded me that we need to always act with humanity and dignity, on an individual and global scale. "I am because we are" – that's the spirit of Ubuntu!

Know your blood pressure

It's possible that you may suffer from high blood pressure (hypertension) and not even know it...

You should get your blood pressure tested at least once a year

Ever wondered why your doctor always measures your blood pressure when you go for check-ups? That's because most people who suffer from high blood pressure or hypertension are not even aware of it because they display no symptoms.

How is blood pressure measured and what do the readings mean?

Your heart, your blood and your arteries all work together to keep you alive. Every time your heart beats it pumps blood into your arteries. This is called systolic pressure. When your heart rests between beats it is called diastolic pressure. Your doctor will measure both to determine your overall blood pressure.

Normal systolic pressure should be 120 or less, and normal diastolic pressure should be 80 or less (a regular reading would look like this: 120/80). Hypertension means that the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your arteries is making your heart work much harder than it's meant to. Over time, this could lead to a heart attack, stroke, heart failure or kidney failure.

TYPES OF HYPERTENSION

- **Primary (or essential) hypertension**
  This is the most common and is usually found in older people.
- **Secondary hypertension**
  This is often caused by other medical conditions or certain medications you're taking for something else.

HOW CAN I LOWER MY BLOOD PRESSURE?

Your doctor will work out the best treatment plan for you. **Often it's just a matter of changing your lifestyle** – eating healthier, exercising more regularly, and getting plenty of sleep. In some cases you may need medication, or to stop certain medication you're taking for another ailment (as often that is the cause of your hypertension).

Get your blood pressure tested regularly

Next time your doctor tests your blood pressure, be grateful that you're having it checked. And if you haven't been for a check-up lately, make your booking today.

Did you know? According to an article by BMC Public Health published in November 2020, hypertension is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, predominantly in Tanzania and Kenya. **The numbers have risen exponentially over the years: 54.6 million in 1990, 130.2 million in 2010, with a projected 216.8 million by 2030.**

VACCINES help save lives

Immunisation through vaccines helps protect you and your family against serious infectious diseases.

Vaccines have been protecting us against life-threatening diseases for over 200 years.

These infectious diseases include smallpox, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), influenza and measles. A vaccine stimulates your immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease. You'll usually receive a vaccine through a needle injection, but some are administered orally or sprayed into your nose.

Access to vaccines remains a problem in some regions

Over one billion children have been vaccinated over the past decade. Today, there are vaccines to protect us against more than 20 diseases, including TB and cervical cancer, and scientists continue to develop ground-breaking immunisation research. These vaccines help to save up to three million lives every year. However, due to insufficient access, there are still nearly 20 million infants around the globe that are not being vaccinated.

Many children missed out on routine vaccinations during the global pandemic

With the world still struggling under the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic and all eyes on the COVID-19 global vaccine rollouts, it's important to remember that routine vaccinations are still a priority. Many children who were due to receive their vaccinations were not immunised since the onset of the pandemic, which puts them at serious risk.

There is also the issue of the media sharing a lot of misleading information about vaccines that causes confusion for many people.

World Immunisation Week at the end of April highlights the importance of vaccines

To build solidarity and bring people together in support of this lifesaving cause, the World Health Organization (WHO) celebrates World Immunisation Week every year, and supports African Vaccination Week. During this week, WHO and their partners unite to increase people's trust and confidence in vaccines and work to increase investment in vaccine initiatives to ensure more people across the globe have access to vaccines.

Vaccines can protect us against drug-resistant diseases

Vaccines are vital in the prevention and control of infectious-disease outbreaks and are an important tool to fight antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

AMR is when microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites) change or become resistant to medication that at one time could cure the infections they cause. AMR exists because more and more people are overusing or misusing antibiotics. It has become a major

public health concern as it's much harder to treat an infection that is resistant to antibiotics, and the treatment is not always effective. If more people receive their routine vaccinations, fewer people would need to take antibiotics. The development of new vaccines is also very effective in protecting people against new strains of viruses (such as multi-drug resistant TB and other diseases that are becoming harder to treat). Nevertheless, developing these takes time and money.

Access to health services in certain countries remains a huge concern

In 2019, 14 million infants didn't receive their initial dose of the diphtheria vaccine largely due to insufficient access to health services. Another 5.7 million children were only partially vaccinated. These children were from the following countries: Angola, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, India, Pakistan and the Philippines.

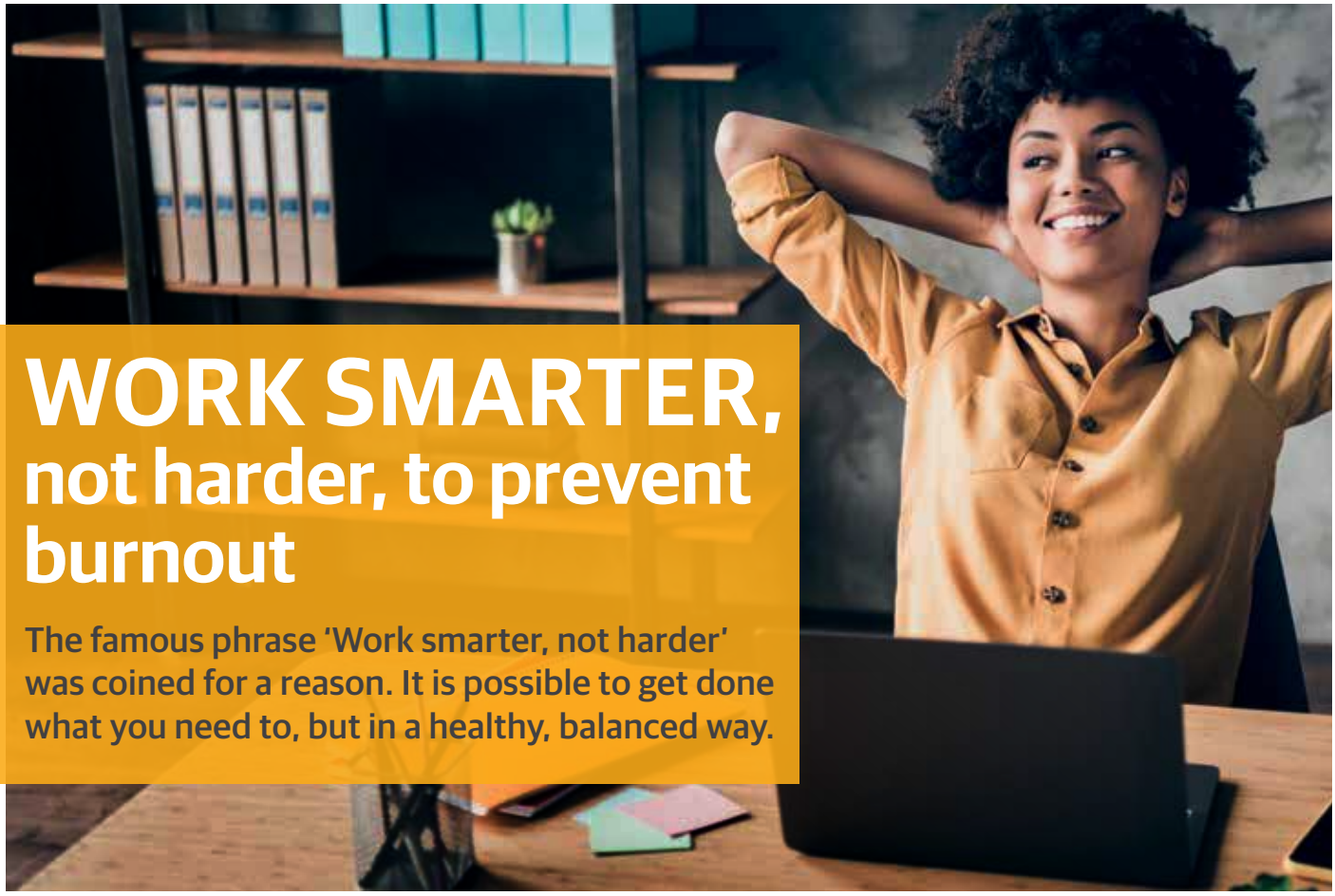
Immunization Agenda 2030 – a global strategy to leave no one behind

The WHO is working to improve access to life-saving vaccinations across the globe with the new Immunization Agenda 2030. Endorsed by countries and organisations around the world, the strategy's inspiring vision for the decade is: 'A world where everyone, everywhere, at every age, fully benefits from vaccines for good health and well-being'.
To find out more about Immunization Agenda 2030, visit:
who.int/teams/immunization-vaccines-and-biologicals/strategies/ia2030

WE COVER ALL THE IMPORTANT CHILD VACCINATIONS

As a Liberty Health Cover member you have full vaccination cover for your children (up to and including age 6) for the following vaccinations:

1. Diphtheria
2. German measles (Rubella)
3. Haemophilus influenzae type B
4. Hepatitis A and B
5. Measles
6. Meningitis
7. Mumps
8. Polio
9. Pneumococcal infections
10. Rabies
11. Rotavirus
12. Tetanus
13. Tuberculosis (BCG)
14. Typhoid
15. Whooping cough
16. Yellow fever



WORK SMARTER, not harder, to prevent burnout

The famous phrase 'Work smarter, not harder' was coined for a reason. It is possible to get done what you need to, but in a healthy, balanced way.

Simple lifestyle changes can help you prevent burnout

We recently hosted two insightful webinars entitled *Burnout to Breakthrough*. These sessions explored why we are pushing ourselves to the limit, and how we can make simple lifestyle changes to prevent burnout and live a more rewarding life. Here are three key tips from those sessions...

1

Manage your energy, not your time

We have four sources of energy – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. The more energy we have, the more capacity we have to work and live. Time is not a resource we can use to expand our capacity. It's not the hours you spend but the energy you bring to the work you do that makes a difference.

To function as your best self, start building energy boosters into your day every 90 minutes. Take a brisk walk, daydream in the sun, do push-ups against a wall, listen to music, or simply take a few deep breaths.

2

Breathe with purpose

We take an average of 20 000 breaths a day – that's a lot! Did you know you can use your breathing to completely reset your nervous system? Make a conscious effort to close your eyes and breathe deeply every day, even if just for a few minutes. Try the exercises from the webinars or Dr Andrew Weil's 4-7-8 technique. It's quick, easy and has many calming benefits. Visit www.drweil.com/videos-features/videos/breathing-exercises-4-7-8-breath/

3

Practise mindfulness

Learn how to tap into your emotions and feelings, and be mindful of what gives you energy. This could be getting proper sleep, not pushing your body beyond its capabilities, stepping away from your screen regularly, or developing an athlete's mindset where you value work as much as you value rest and recovery.

Watch our *Burnout to Breakthrough* webinars. Simply visit www.libertyhealth.net, click on your country, then click on 'news' on the blue banner at the top of the page.

UNDERSTANDING DOWN SYNDROME

How much do you really know about people with Down syndrome (DS), apart from the fact that they have an extra chromosome and are generally happy, likeable people?

"The only disability in life is a bad attitude." If you live your life by these words (from Scott Hamilton), it changes the way you see the world. We often think we understand what a certain type of disability means when we see it – but do we really?

People with DS are usually regarded as happy, funny, sociable and outgoing. But what about the condition they have? In this article we share some interesting facts about DS.

Physical appearance

The first noticeable trait of a DS person is their appearance. They have distinctive physical characteristics: almond-shaped eyes, a flatter face and smaller ears. Although they seem to look similar to each other, individuals with DS all have traits that resemble their immediate family members too.

What is the impact of the extra chromosome?

At conception a baby inherits genetic information from its parents in the form of 46 chromosomes (23 from the mother and 23 from the father). Chromosomes contain all your genes that determine the features you inherit from your family, such as dimples, freckles or facial shape. In most cases of DS, the baby gets an extra chromosome. This usually causes delays in the baby's development, both physically and mentally. The most common health issues in DS people are congenital heart defects, damaged lungs from developing pulmonary hypertension, hearing problems, learning difficulties and visual impairment. It's very important to remember that although some children with DS need a lot of medical attention, others lead fairly normal and healthy lives. Most DS children have mild intellectual impairments and can learn like everyone else (just sometimes in a different manner, or at a slightly slower pace) and they are capable of developing wonderful skills throughout their lives.

Living with a DS child

As a parent, it's common to initially feel shock, panic, sadness and fear about the overwhelming unknowns of raising a child with DS. Talking to other parents of children with DS and learning as much as you can about the condition can help tremendously. Brian Horn, a father to a DS child, says: "Within hours after learning my son Jackson had Down syndrome, I thought of the future and was terrified he would be ostracised or bullied in school. I remembered how, when I was in school, we barely saw kids with Down syndrome, and we really didn't understand or know much about them. But it's a different world now. Jackson spends a good percentage of his day integrated with his peers, and he's even a mini-celebrity. I've walked behind him at school and he is flooded with high-five requests and hugs."

25 Years
The average life expectancy of a DS person in 1985.
Today it's 60!

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Fighting fraud – how you can help

You can play a key role in combating the ever-increasing problem of insurance fraud.

Here are three ways you can help:

1. **Update and check your details** Please ensure we have your latest email address, cellphone and landline numbers. This ensures that you always receive your claim statements and other important information from us.

2. **Check your claims** After receiving treatment, check that the details on your claim are correct before it's submitted for payment.

3. **Report anything suspicious** If anything on your claim statement seems suspicious, please report this to Liberty Health Forensic Services (LHFS) by emailing fraud@libertyhealth.net. You can also anonymously report any fraud-related suspicions by contacting the hotline number for your country listed at the bottom of the Fraud page on www.libertyhealth.net. To get to the Fraud page, click on the Fraud link on the bottom banner of your country website page.

YOUR ACTIONS DO PAY OFF

Last year, five healthcare providers were removed from the Liberty Health network after being investigated and found to have committed fraud. They are currently facing further litigation sanctions. Four additional providers are under investigation and have been temporarily suspended.

CONTACT US

GHANA
Apex Health Insurance Ltd,
4th Floor, Zion House,
7 Nii Yemoh Avenue, Boundary Road,
Shiashie, East Legon, Cantonments
PO Box ST 237, Accra, Ghana
T +233 265 380 622
E info@apexhealthghana.com
Emergencies (24 hrs) +233 501 304 156

KENYA
Heritage Insurance Company Ltd,
Liberty House (formerly CFC House),
Processional Way
PO Box 30390 00100, GPO,
Nairobi, Kenya
T +254 711 076 333
E healthcareundertakings@heritage.co.ke
Emergencies (24 hrs/pre-authorisation)
+254 728 111 001/2 / +254 733 550 050 /
+254 728 607 689

LESOTHO
Liberty Life Lesotho, Unit 39,
Maseru Mall, Thetsane, Maseru,
Lesotho
T +266 2231 4589
E info@libertyhealth.net
Emergencies (24 hrs) +266 2231 4590

MALAWI
Libertas General Insurance Company
Ground Floor, Unit House, Victoria
Avenue, Blantyre, Malawi
PO Box 354, Blantyre, Malawi
T +265 1833 393 / +265 1830 610 /
+ 265 1754 810
E malawi@libertyhealth.net
Emergencies (24 hrs) +265 993 921 957

MAURITIUS
Liberty Health C/O Health & Travel
Department, Swan General Ltd, 7th Floor,
Swan Centre, Intendance Street,
Port Louis, Mauritius
T +230 212 2600/2900
E mauritius@libertyhealth.net
Emergencies (24 hrs) +230 5941 7533 /
+230 5253 5035

MOZAMBIQUE
Liberty Blue,
Av Julius Nyerere, no. 1339,
Maputo, Mozambique
T +258 84 373 7376/7 /
+258 84 390 1289 / 800 30 3333
E mozambique@libertyhealth.net
Emergencies (24 hrs)
+84 390 1289 (Vodacom) Toll Free

NIGERIA
Total Health Trust, 2 Marconi Road,
Palmgrove Estate, Lagos, Nigeria
Queries, Emergencies,
Pre-authorisation
T +234 0700 Total HT
(+234 700 868 25 48)
E contactcentre@totalhealthtrust.com

SOUTH AFRICA
Liberty Health, Liberty Building,
Estuary Precinct, Century Boulevard,
Century City, 7441, Western Cape,
South Africa
T +27 21 657 7740
E info@libertyhealth.net
Pre-authorisation
E membercare@libertyhealth.net

TANZANIA
Strategis Insurance (T) Limited,
Plot no 1520, Bains Avenue, 1st Floor
Masaki Ikon Building, Msasani Peninsula
PO Box 7893, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
T +255 222 6025 / 70 / +255 222 6025
74 / +255 222 6025 81
E insurance@strategis.co.tz
Emergencies (24 hrs) +255 784 555 911 /
+255 754 777 100

UGANDA
Liberty Life Assurance
Uganda Limited,
Madhvani Building, Plot 99-101,
Buganda Road, Kampala
PO Box 22938, Kampala, Uganda
T +256 414 233 794 / +256 312 202 695 /
+256 414 231 983 / +256 312 304 000
E uganda@libertyhealth.net
Emergencies (24 hrs)
+256 779 558 733 (Members)
+256 772 578 323 (Providers)

ZAMBIA
Liberty Life Insurance,
Kwacha Pension House, 1st Floor,
Stand 4604, Tito Road,
Rhodes Park, Lusaka, Zambia
T +260 211 255 540 / 1 / 36
E zambia@libertyhealth.net
Emergencies (24 hrs) +260 950 397 863 /
+260 965 205 113 / +260 955 256 871