

Life insurers make available telephonic pre-testing HIV counselling service

Consumers who apply for life insurance policies that require an HIV test are now for the first time also able to receive telephonic pre-test counselling via a toll free number before taking the HIV test.

Gerhard Joubert, CEO of the Life Offices' Association (LOA), says by making counselling available via a call centre, South Africa has achieved another world first. Internationally in the insurance environment, life insurance applicants receive only written pre-test counselling information before consenting to the HIV test.

Telephonic pre-test counselling service once for a policy which requires an HIV test available on 0800 562 562 in all official languages

Joubert says while this has been available in South Africa as well, LOA member companies and their partnering pathology groups have also been offering individual pre-test counselling by trained counsellors at the laboratories.

"But while this service fills a need, it is not easily accessible to our clients living outside major centres.

In addition this counselling is only available in English and during office hours."

He explains that this prompted the LOA to approach an independent service provider to provide nationwide telephonic pre-test counselling. The new service can be accessed from 07h00 to 19h00, Mondays to Fridays, in all official languages.

Joubert says half of the costs of the call centre will be funded by the National Pathology Group (NPG), which represents most of the private laboratories who conduct the HIV tests on behalf of life companies.

Clients can access this telephonic pre-test counselling service once they have applied for a policy which requires an HIV test by calling 0800 562 562 and providing their name, the insurance company's name and their policy or policy quote number. Counsellors are trained in everything relating to HIV/AIDS, as well as the relevant insurance aspects.

