

PRESS RELEASE

LETSHEGO BOTSWANA PARTNERS WITH BOTSWANA MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS AND 'PRIMARY CARE INTERNATIONAL' TO INCREASE DELIVERY IN NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CARE ACROSS 8 DISTRICTS

- Letshego Botswana partners with Botswana's Ministry of Health and Wellness ("MoHW") and an international health systems and people strengthening organisation', Primary Care International ("PCI") to improve the delivery of non-communicable disease (NCD) healthcare in Botswana.
- The strategic partnership aims to increase the delivery of non-communicable disease care and support Botswana across 8 Districts.
- The partnership will involve training and mentoring of Community Healthcare Workers, in addition to providing sustainable capacity in the administration, management, monitoring and record keeping of non-communicable disease (NCD) care.
- The partnership will focus on supporting non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the formal primary healthcare sector – these diseases include hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory conditions.

Gaborone, Botswana – 11 December 2018: Letshego Botswana, in partnership with Botswana's Ministry of Health and Wellness ("MoHW") and international health systems and people strengthening organisation, Primary Care International ("PCI") is increasing the benefits of non-communicable diseases care and treatment for Botswana across 8 districts, through the 'Letshego Botswana Healthcare Innovation Programme'. The duration of the Botswana partnership is twelve months and the implementation of this programme started in July 2018. The initiative's objective is to support and build capacity of Health Care Workers with training aligned with the latest international standards in healthcare, mentoring as well as providing administrative and managerial support in policy, monitoring and assessment.

This Botswana Healthcare Innovation Programme is one of the five regional healthcare programmes the Letshego Group has launched across its African footprint in the interest of building capacity and reach of effective NCD treatment and care for communities where Letshego operates.

Fergus Ferguson, Letshego Botswana's Chief Executive Officer commented, *"Letshego is supporting programmes and initiatives that look to build capacity and effective treatment in non-communicable diseases care given the rising statistics in NCD illnesses across Africa's emerging markets. Diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension are just some of the ailments that provide an increasing challenge to the health and wellness of many communities where Letshego operates. With the increasing strain and limited resourcing of local health departments, NCDs are preventing many individuals from sustainably earning an income and supporting their*

families, or preventing children from attending school and getting an education. With PCI and the MoHW, Letshego aims to forge an effective partnership that increases the reach, impact and support of NCD programmes to more Batswana, thereby supporting improved awareness, health and productivity in our communities.”

According to World Health Organization, non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of deaths globally and are responsible for causing close to 40 million (70%) deaths each year. This means that NCDs have surpassed HIV, TB, and Malaria combined in terms of mortality rates. What is concerning is that Batswana continue to engage in behaviours that put them at an increasing risk of getting these diseases. In 2014, a survey that was looking at the burden and risk factors for NCDs showed that 30.6% of Batswana are overweight and obese, whilst 6% were either on medicines for diabetes or have elevated blood sugar.

The Acting Director of Department of Public Health in the Ministry of Health and Wellness Ms. Thato Sengwaketse, said, *“This NCD care project is an ideal example of how public-private partnerships can deliver greater value for our communities. NCD care is a critical part of the MoHW’s healthcare framework, and this partnership came at an opportune time where the Ministry is on a paradigm shift, focusing more on primary care where prevention lies at the core. It is therefore important to capacitate our health care workers and actually be innovative and evidence-based as we deliver our mandate as a Ministry. It goes without saying that after the 8 districts which this programme covers (Kweneng East, Selibe Phikwe, Gaborone, Maun, Lobatse, Francistown, Mahalapye and Serowe), this initiative will be replicated and expanded to the other 19 remaining districts to ensure sustainability well beyond the term of this partnership.*

Each partner brings valued support to this initiative. Letshego Botswana has sponsored the project in excess of half a million Pula; PCI has leveraged its international experience and network by providing internationally accredited medical practitioners to provide training and mentoring support, as well as sharing the latest standards, policies and practice in NCD healthcare, monitoring and administration; and Botswana’s Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) remains the core and primary partner by providing the healthcare framework, facilities and human resources to ensure that the project is a success and reaches as many members of the community as possible.

*One of the leading experts from **Primary Care International (PCI)**, **Dr. David Mazza** said, “This ambitious project seeks to primarily embed a structured approach that will standardise and improve the quality of diabetes and other NCD services at a primary level. It will also facilitate early detection and prompt management of patients, and ultimately reduce morbidity and mortality stemming from diabetes, cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases in Botswana.”*

To date, the three-way partnership continues to roll out structured diabetes and cardiovascular workshops and has already trained 32 master trainers at primary care level. The training of other health care workers is on-going and by the end of December this year, the initiative will have covered a total of 7 districts. Once the training element of the programme is concluded, the next phase of the project involves observations and structured mentorships. This second phase of the programme is imperative in increasing the success and value of the partnership, enhancing the impact and longer term sustainable benefits for the broader community.

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About PCI

Primary Care International (PCI) deliver strategic support and professional development to strengthen family medicine across the world. Based on the latest evidence, we offer peer-to-peer training and develop sustainable solutions with local partners for quality, cost-effective community-based healthcare. We build capacity in people and primary health care systems: By training health care workers to deliver evidence-based care, adapted to local contexts; By training healthcare workers to cascade this training to others; By working with people to develop their strategic and organisational approach to care. Combining the patient and population perspectives, PCI takes a comprehensive family medicine approach that focuses on quality care delivered in the community. For more info visit: www.pci-360.com

About Letshego Botswana

Letshego Financial Services Botswana (Letshego Botswana) opened its doors in 1998 in Gaborone, Botswana. As a subsidiary of the Letshego Group, Letshego Botswana has steadily grown into a leading financial services provider.

The company contributes approximately 40% to Group profits. In addition to formally employed individuals in government, parastatal and private sectors, it has made inroads into servicing low to middle-income earners in the mining sector. In recent years, Letshego Botswana has been engaged in its Improving Lives Campaign that encourages customers to use their loan proceeds towards productive rather than consumptive lending in order to improve their lives.