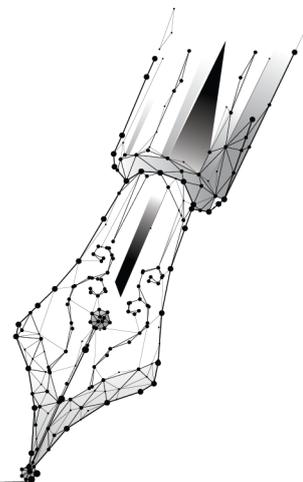




2026

SOUTHERN AFRICAN

HEALTH
JOURNAL



Call for Abstracts

ENTRIES: ENTRIES CLOSE ON 10 APRIL 2026



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Call for Abstracts!

Health systems globally are confronting escalating pressures that threaten affordability, equitable access, quality of care, and long-term sustainability. Rising costs, workforce shortages, demographic shifts, technological disruption, and widening health inequities demand innovative, evidence-based solutions and cross-sector collaboration.

The BHF Scientific Committee invites researchers, organisations, healthcare practitioners, industry experts, and policymakers to submit abstracts for consideration at the BHF's upcoming Annual Conference.

The closing date for abstract submissions is **10 April 2026**.

Southern African Health Journal

Abstracts can be submitted as a paper for the journal and a presentation.

Length of Abstract: The Abstract submission should be **250** words.

Important Information and Due Dates

- Deadline for Abstract submissions no later than **10 April 2026**.
- Deadline for the first draft paper submission is no later than **08 May 2026**.
- Deadline for the final draft after peer reviews should be submitted by **29 May 2026**.
- All details regarding your peer reviewer will be sent to you in due course.
- The final paper should be pitched at a level that is accessible to an audience that is not very technical yet at the same time be based on strong scientific evidence.
- For any questions, kindly contact Lesley Mogano at lesleym@bhfglobal.com or 011 537 0271

Theme

Facing Headwinds – Thriving in the Unknown

Theme Summary

The 2026 BHF Annual Conference marks a historic milestone: 25 years of uniting, advocating, and shaping healthcare funding across Southern Africa. This year's theme reflects our shared journey while looking ahead, acknowledging today's complex challenges and inspiring courage and innovation to navigate the future.

These headwinds are not obstacles but catalysts for renewal. Just as an airplane gains lift by flying into the wind, our industry can harness these forces to innovate and build resilient systems that protect members and expand access to quality care.

Facing Headwinds: Certain Uncertainty – Thriving in the Unknown captures this pivotal moment. It calls for collective leadership, practical solutions, and bold partnerships. By uniting funders, administrators, providers, policymakers, and innovators, the conference will explore how to turn disruption into sustainable, equitable healthcare for all.

We invite the submission of abstracts based on the topics outlined below:

Topic themes & session titles:

1. Regulatory turbulence & policy uncertainty

1. Navigating the NHI crosswinds: preparing for policy shifts while ensuring stability
2. Regulation in flux: how schemes and administrators can thrive amid legal and political uncertainty
3. 25 years of policy evolution: lessons for the next era of population health risk mitigation
4. From courtrooms to boardrooms: managing compliance risk in an unpredictable landscape

2. Economic pressures, affordability & sustainability

5. The affordability crisis: re-crafting benefit design for a stressed consumer
6. Sustainability under strain: building resilient schemes in a low-growth, high-cost economy
7. Funding models for the next decade: balancing member protection and financial viability
8. Healthcare in an inflationary world: global shocks, local solutions
9. Innovate/re-engineer business models for optimal healthcare outcomes and efficiency

3. AI digital health & technological disruption

10. AI as a game changer in chronic disease management: from prediction to prevention
11. AI headwinds or tailwinds? Harnessing technology to strengthen funding and care delivery
12. Barriers to technology adoption by providers and patients
13. From disruption to deployment: practical AI use cases for administrators & schemes
14. Cybersecurity in the unknown: protecting member data in a high-risk digital era
15. Digital trust: ensuring equity, ethics, and governance in an AI-led health system
16. Informed decision making: investing in real world data collection & research
17. Ethical and regulatory considerations in AI

18. AI-driven decision support
19. Data governance and digital health innovation
20. AI impact on healthcare financing and delivery

4. Climate change, sustainability & future health systems

21. Climate shock & health shock: preparing southern africa's health systems for a warmer world
22. Green healthcare financing: how funders can support environmentally sustainable healthcare
23. Climate-driven diseases: funding models for emerging health burdens

5. Integrated care, access & equity

24. Closing the access gap: innovative approaches to affordable universal care
25. Beyond the hospital: strengthening primary care, community care and virtual care pathways
26. Equity as a strategic imperative: transforming healthcare funding for inclusive growth
27. Unpacking the value-add of different benefit design models
28. Mitigating the non-communicable disease burden explosion

6. Leadership, governance & industry collaboration

29. Steering through the storm: leadership skills for a volatile health environment
30. The power of collective action: 25 years of BHF & the future of regional collaboration
31. Rethinking governance: building trust and transparency in a polarised health sector
32. Co-creating the future: public-private partnerships that deliver measurable impact

7. Innovation, disruption & new models of care

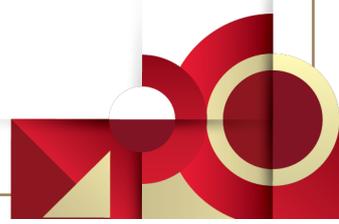
33. The future of managed care: rethinking healthcare funding, delivery, and value in an era of disruption
34. Turning headwinds into lift: innovations that are redefining healthcare funding
35. Value-based care in uncertain times: practical steps for scaling in southern africa
36. The future scheme: what healthcare funding will look like in 2030 and beyond

8. Member-centricity & consumer behaviour

37. Strategic stakeholder management in healthcare funding: building trust, alignment, and system sustainability
38. Provider-payer-patient information gaps
39. Transparency in healthcare pricing and benefits
40. The new health consumer: expectations, behaviours & trust in a post-pandemic world
41. Rebuilding trust in healthcare funding
42. Member outcomes as a compass: designing benefits for real-world impact
43. Reducing information asymmetry in healthcare funding: transparency, trust, and better decision-making
44. Driving preventive health adoption in healthcare funding: incentives, behaviour change, and system design

9. Geopolitics, global shocks & health security

45. Pandemic preparedness in the unknown: how Southern Africa can build health systems that withstand global shockwaves
 46. From fragile to resilient: reassessing reliance on global supply chains for medicines and devices across Southern Africa
 47. Healthcare and geopolitics: how global power shifts are redefining investment and influence in Southern Africa's health sector
 48. Cross-border outbreak response: reimagining cross-border coordination for future outbreaks.
-



Submission Guidelines

1. Please note that abstract submissions are only accepted via the BHF submission website. To begin the process, contributors will need to create an account and then upload their abstract electronically.
2. Please make sure to submit a comprehensive application that clearly includes all the necessary information for review.
3. The abstract must be submitted by the primary author. An email confirming the submission will be automatically sent to that author's email address.
4. The primary author serves as the corresponding author and will handle all communication with the BHF.
5. Please indicate preferred type of presentation format, either podium presentation (10 minutes with 5 minutes for Q and A), journal publication or poster presentation.
6. Please ensure that all abstracts are complete and that they are submitted before the deadline. Incomplete submissions will not be eligible for presentation or review.
7. Please ensure that submissions are concise, with a maximum word limit of 300. Submissions should include the following information: background/introduction, purpose, methods, results, limitations and conclusions/implications for practice.
8. Submissions should align with the conference's main focus and theme.

Acceptance Terms and Conditions

1. Presenters are kindly requested to disclose any potential conflict of interest related to the content they will be presenting. This includes any commercial interest, affiliation with a vendor, or receipt of royalties. Additionally, presenters are required to confirm that their abstract presentations will not be utilised for the purpose of promoting a specific product or service.
2. The BHF reserves the right to revoke the acceptance of an abstract if any conflict of interest is found at a later stage.
3. **Abstracts accepted for oral presentation at the BHF Conference are subject to the following terms and conditions:**
4. **Acceptance for oral presentation is conditional upon registration and full payment of the conference registration fee. Presenters must register, pay, and attend the conference to present their work.**
5. **The BHF Selection Committee reserves the right to withdraw an accepted presentation if registration and payment requirements are not fulfilled within the specified timeframe.**
6. **Where a co-author presents on behalf of the primary author, the presenting co-author must also register and pay the conference registration fee.**
7. **Presenters are responsible for all costs associated with participation, including conference registration fees, travel, accommodation, and any related expenses.**
8. **The BHF Selection Committee reserves the right to make final decisions regarding abstract acceptance, presentation format, and programme placement.**
9. **Accepted presenters must comply with all presentation guidelines, timelines, and submission requirements communicated by the conference organisers.**

Acceptance Notification

The primary presenting author will receive an email notification of the acceptance of their abstract. Only this author needs to respond to the presentation invitation form.

If the author does not provide the 'intent to present' information, their abstract will be disqualified from presentation.

After the primary author has confirmed their acceptance, the BHF will request some additional materials that will be shared with all participants at the conference. This will include:

1. A short biography
2. High resolution (300dpi), high quality head and shoulders photo(s) of the author(s)

Titanium Awards

Papers that make the shortlist will also be considered for the prestigious Titanium Award for Best Paper, based on the following criteria:

1. Is the paper relevant?
2. Does it address the intended topic?
3. Does this paper add new knowledge?
4. Are key concepts introduced and explained clearly?
5. Are methods and assumptions explained clearly?
6. Are there clear conclusions and recommendations?
7. Is the paper well-written and well-structured?
8. Does the paper have enough substance?
9. Consistency in referencing
10. Is the technical approach sound and well-chosen?
11. Can one trust the claims of the paper — are they supported by proper background and evaluation (with the target users, when appropriate)?
12. Is the paper appropriate for its title?
13. Does it describe what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated?
14. Does the executive summary provide sufficient detail on the paper?
15. Is the introduction appropriate? (The introduction should summarize relevant research to provide context, and explain what other authors' findings are, if any)
16. the paper present relevant work?
17. Does it provide one or more alternative views/perspectives against which to contrast this paper?
18. Does it describe the limitations and major obstacles found during the process?
19. Open research avenues: Does it explain any future perspectives that the work opens?

Posters

All accepted papers will be promoted at the Annual BHF Conference by means of printed A3 posters, which will be physically displayed throughout the venue.