

WHX returns to Johannesburg as global medtech giants compete for South Africa's R18.4bn medical device market

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, July 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- South Africa's healthcare economy is entering its most commercially concentrated phase yet, with global medical technology manufacturers accelerating their push for market share in a region now valued at over R18.4 billion (USD 1.12 billion) in medical devices alone and on track to reach R27.4 billion (USD 1.67 billion) by 2032 .

According to the WHX Insights MedTech Report on [Unlocking Africa's Medical Technology Potential](#), Africa's broader medtech market is projected to grow from R186.1

billion (USD 11.33 billion) in 2025 to R251.7 billion (USD 15.33 billion) by 2030, driven by rapid urbanisation, rising non-communicable disease burdens and expanding private healthcare investment. At the centre of this commercial surge is Johannesburg, home to the headquarters, procurement teams and distributor networks that control access to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region's fastest-growing healthcare markets.

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World Health Expo (WHX) 2026 in Johannesburg is the definitive platform where this global competition plays out. Taking place from 6 - 8 October 2026 at the Gallagher Convention Centre, under the theme “Where South Africa's

healthcare industry meets, trades and does business”, WHX will bring together more than 600 exhibitors from 60+ countries, 13 country pavilions and over 10,000 professional visits across a 15,000 net sqm show floor. For international medtech brands, regional distributors and hospital group procurement leaders, the event represents the most commercially concentrated point of access to Southern Africa's healthcare economy.

According to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), South Africa already accounts for 18% of Africa's R65.7 billion (USD 4 billion) medical device import bill, underlining its role as the continent's primary gateway for healthcare trade. Johannesburg amplifies this advantage: it hosts the regional headquarters of major hospital groups including Netcare, Life Healthcare and Mediclinic, alongside laboratory networks and group purchasing organisations that influence procurement decisions across Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini and beyond.

Recent investment commitments underscore this momentum: Life Healthcare alone announced a R2.5 billion (USD 152.2 million) infrastructure expansion in late 2025, adding 89 acute beds, 40 rehabilitation beds and 20 renal stations across its facilities by 2027. With the African Pooled Procurement Mechanism (APPM) now active across 55 African Union member states and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) reshaping cross-border trade frameworks, the opportunity for well-positioned suppliers is significant. The APPM's first tender achieved 30-90% cost savings on reproductive, maternal and newborn health medicines, signalling a fundamental shift toward aggregated, strategic procurement that rewards credible, scalable partners. The WHX Insights report also highlights those strategic partnerships, particularly between global innovators and credible local distributors, are now the single most critical success factor for market entry.

"WHX is really the place where Southern Africa's medtech industry comes together. It's where the serious conversations happen - manufacturers meet distributors, procurement teams find the right partners, and deals actually get made," said Tom Coleman, Portfolio Director - Healthcare, inD. "We're bringing the event back to Johannesburg in 2026 after two years in Cape Town, and the timing couldn't be better. Our WHX Insights MedTech Report shows that the companies investing in strong local partnerships right now are going to be the ones leading this market as it grows."

The 2026 edition introduces a significantly expanded commercial programme, anchored by the [WHX Connections Programme](#): an application-only, one-to-one meeting platform designed to connect verified international exhibitors with qualified South African and SADC buyers and distributors. Running from 6 - 7 October, the Connections Programme ensures that every meeting is pre-vetted and shortlisted based on product fit, geographic reach, and growth capacity, and aligned to specific business objectives.

This is complemented by the Laboratory Zone, three dedicated Healthcare Indabas (the Healthcare Excellence Indaba, Lab Indaba, and Quality Management and Patient Safety Indaba), Business Workshops, and nine product categories spanning medical devices, diagnostics, imaging, orthopaedics, IT solutions, healthcare infrastructure, wellness and prevention, disposables, and laboratory technologies.

Supported by leading industry and professional bodies, including COHSASA and the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), WHX will also see COHSASA host the Quality Management & Patient Safety Indaba on 8 October, chaired by Professor Sabelile Tenza, bringing together the

region's accreditation and patient-safety community during WHX.

"Southern Africa's healthcare growth must be matched by an equal commitment to quality and patient safety. Accreditation is what turns investment and new technology into trusted, accountable care," said Jacqui Stewart, CEO of COHSASA. "WHX is the ideal platform for this conversation - it connects the innovators bringing products to market with the bodies ensuring those products are delivered safely and to standard to ensure the best quality care."

The WHX portfolio includes three key healthcare events in Africa, held in Nairobi, Lagos and Johannesburg. These events form a unified platform that connects global brands with regional distributors.

Healthcare professionals, distributors, procurement leaders and investors are invited to register to attend, apply for exhibition space or explore sponsorship opportunities at WHX in Johannesburg 2026:

- Event homepage: <https://www.worldhealthexpo.com/events/healthcare/johannesburg/>
- Register to attend:
<https://www.worldhealthexpo.com/events/healthcare/johannesburg/attend/registration-lp/>
- Book a stand / exhibit:
<https://www.worldhealthexpo.com/events/healthcare/johannesburg/exhibit/apply-for-a-stand/>
- WHX Connections Programme:
<https://www.worldhealthexpo.com/events/healthcare/johannesburg/attend/whx-connect/>

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