

Cape Town unveils Africa's Access to Advanced Healthcare coalition

Premier Alan Winde accompanied President Cyril Ramaphosa last week to the launch of the Accelerate Africa's Access to Advanced Healthcare (AAAH) coalition and the official opening of the NANTSA vaccine manufacturing campus in Cape Town.



Source: Premier Alan Winde. The interior of the new NantSA vaccine plant opened in Cape Town at the same time as the launch of the AAAH coalition.

Wednesday marked the launch of Africa's Access to Advanced Healthcare (AAAH) coalition with NANTSA which aims to manufacture a billion doses of the Covid-19 vaccine by 2025.

The coalition also aims to establish innovative manufacturing techniques to provide new treatments for life-threatening diseases including cancer, Covid-19, Tuberculosis and HIV/Aids.

"I had the opportunity to join President Ramaphosa in welcoming this launch, led by Dr Patrick Soon-Shiong, which includes biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, various levels of government, NGOs, and academia – to bolster this manufacturing sector," Winde said.

Growing Cape Town's health-technology sector

"The fact that this investment is happening right here in Cape Town is great news for our economy, which already has a growing health-technology sector and is well-positioned to grow over the next decade. This is critical as we focus on the second pandemic of unemployment, by creating the jobs we need to recover.

"It is also inspiring that Cape Town, will play a major role in ensuring that access to life-saving vaccines is achieved across the African continent. Throughout our vaccination programme, we have emphasized that access and equity are non-negotiables to a successful programme because every life matters and no person should be left behind. This should be the case within South Africa, but also across the world.

"I am also excited about what this means for our established health-technology sector in the province. This sector generated nearly R1bn (R912.3m) in medical devices and pharmaceutical exports in 2019. Between 2015 and 2019, pharmaceutical exports saw a year-on-year increase.

SA positions itself to be a global leader in pharmaceutical supply

"Nationally, the pharmaceutical and medical-devices markets were at an estimated R62.7bn and R19.7bn respectively in 2020, and were expected to grow to R90.4bn and R29.6bn respectively by 2025. If we leverage this clear competitive advantage, we can become global leaders in this space and ensure, that right here at the southern tip of Africa, we play a leading role in the fight against the major health challenges of our time.

"In supporting NANTSA - a division of NANTWorks - we, together with Wesgro and the City of Cape Town, have been facilitating since 2020, site visits and providing technical details on properties being considered for the campus. This has included the streamlining of property planning and approval processes.

Supporting the growth of the country's bio-technology firms

"The Western Cape Government has also supported businesses in the biologics, pharmaceutical and vaccine space more generally by partnering with Wesgro - the City of Cape Town's economic investment unit - and the Department of Science and Innovation since 2011 to support growth.

"In the last two years alone, we have supported the following initiatives:

- * Afrigen and WHO hub: together with the City of Cape Town, we have facilitated Afrigen's property-permitting and planning-approval processes to enable a more efficient process towards their establishment of the World Health Organisation's first mRNA technology transfer hub in Africa.
- * Biovac expansion to accommodate Pfizer vaccine-production facilities on current site: Wesgro facilitated Biovac's permitting and planning applications for expansion on their current site to enable vaccine manufacturing. The building plans for the modification of the facilities were received on 25 November, 2021.



Source: Alan Wnde. South African-American businessman Patrick Soon-Shiong opens a new vaccine plant in Cape Town.

"We have also supported the broader health-tech industry in the Western Cape by:

- * Establishing the Health Tech Business Week for industry B2B and B2G engagements, hosted on a virtual platform during the pandemic.
- * Promoting the industry by creating and distributing the health-tech industry promotional publication, "Health Tech Pioneers".
- * Supporting the establishment of the Western Cape Medical Devices Cluster towards increased production and export.
- * Placing 12 health-tech companies on the Endeavor accelerator programme for export purposes.

"We know that we need to roll out the red carpet for investors and make doing business as easy as possible in our province. We can accelerate economic growth and create jobs if we do so. This is our number one priority.

"I want to especially thank and recognise Dr Soon-Shiong for his pioneering contribution to our region. Our investment teams stand ready to assist you as you execute this amazing project so that we not only save lives but also create jobs, in our country and on our continent."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>