

## COMMITTED TO A HEALTHY AFRICA

Africa, home to more than 1.3 billion people, is a diverse continent that offers unmatched human and natural resources with the potential to yield inclusive growth, enabling Africans to live healthier and prosperous lives. Despite challenges, the continent is steady on its path to create an entirely new development journey, harnessing the potential of its resources and its people.

In the recent past, strong economic growth in Africa has helped reduce poverty to 43 percent of the African population. Yet, as Africa's population expands — estimated to reach 2.5 billion by 2050 — the region faces a critical challenge of creating the foundations for long-term inclusive growth.

Many countries in Africa still contend with high levels of child and maternal mortality, malnutrition is far too common, and most health systems are not able to deal effectively with epidemics and the growing burden of chronic diseases.









## COVID-19 ADDS TO HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has not helped matters, and dismal vaccination records in the continent bring into sharper focus the fact that many of the African countries have little to no access to life-saving shots. In fact, fewer than 1 in 20 people are fully vaccinated!

In this context, the new Cigna 360° Well-Being Survey, covering more than 18,000 people in 21 markets across five continents about their perceptions of health and wellbeing based on five well-being indices of family, financial, physical, social, and work, assumes great significance.

### THE IMPACT OF HIGH VS LOW VACCINATION RATE ON GLOBAL WELL-BEING

		 <b>PHYSICAL</b>	 <b>SOCIAL</b>	 <b>FAMILY</b>	 <b>FINANCIAL</b>	 <b>WORKPLACE</b>
Lower	60.3	57.9	61.3	64.0	51.9	66.7
Higher	63.0	59.4	62.6	67.7	56.6	69.9



## DROP IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING INDICES

Comparing the latest data to that from the last survey in early 2020, health and well-being are still depressed in Africa compared to before the pandemic, and unfortunately, those who are less resilient are being impacted by high levels of stress, especially among the adults, and negativity.

Although there is still a long way to go before the dust settles and the long-term impacts of this period are fully understood, the survey reinforces how the ongoing surge in cases across Africa could lead to more challenges in the well-being indices. Increased education on the issue could go a long way in helping Africa on its road to recovery.

## KEY OFFTAKES FROM THE WELLBEING SURVEY

On a **macro-economic level**, Africa is not out of the woods yet. The ongoing pandemic has only accentuated the challenges in the continent with surging cases and low vaccination rates – this is having a significant impact on the financial well-being in the continent, which is much lower than the global average.

**Stress index** is high in Africa and is primarily affecting adults. Increasingly, the reference to stress as a condition has lesser stigma in Africa, and there is heightened transparency on reporting about stress. The survey proved that financial worries, be it personal or family, and uncertainty about the future increased stress levels in Africa.



There are clear indications that Africans prefer **hybrid health** consultations from their doctors and medical practitioners. The survey showed that most respondents who went in for virtual health consultations used it mainly for general health advice and counseling, emphasizing the growing importance of virtual healthcare in the continent.

Africans are looking for a **job change**. Although there were fewer occurrences of job changes in the past 12 months in the continent, the trend is likely to swing the other way. One of the primary reasons will be the existing gap in employee needs in Africa, compared to the support infrastructure available to them in other global markets, such as health insurance which allows virtual health consultations or holistic support to help manage the work-life balance. Overall, employee expectations are changing, and they expect more health and well-being support from employers.



The Cigna survey showed extremely **low job satisfaction** among Africans in terms of salary packages and employee benefits. Increasingly, there is a preference among Africans to **work from home**. Stability on the job front is another factor that is affecting work well-being among Africans. Cigna supports its employees in Africa on the Work-from-Home front, extending greater connectivity, leading to efficient work outcomes. Employees are also supported with office readiness and a clear strategy on a phased return-to-office and new working approach.

For Africans, **Whole Health** is a top priority. They are committed to healthy living amidst the evolving situation of the pandemic globally. Whole Health has been rated as very important in the continent, coupled with higher resilience among the population.

Africa **performed well in the Physical and Social well-being indices** compared to the global average and other markets. Both working men and women with younger children (age 18 or below) are the most consistently positive groups throughout the survey have been juggling additional responsibilities of homeschooling or childcare, they have remained resilient in the face of the pandemic.



## AFRICA PERFORMED WELL IN THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING INDICES



The survey provides an overview of the key challenges in Africa from a well-being perspective and reinforces the importance of offering comprehensive plans that include more mental health support in the continent. It also aims to offer additional value to clients and prospects – be it in ensuring their well-being or offering a healthy work environment.

That is perhaps why this year's 360 Well-Being Survey is more important than ever before. In these unprecedented times, the survey data and results help us have a greater understanding of how health and well-being are evolving so that we can go on to build healthier, optimistic societies, economies, and communities.

