



PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW

NOTICE

Private Practice Review presents the reader with a summary of the most relevant breaking news in the local and global healthcare industry, as obtained from media sources, including the public broadcaster, independent television broadcasters, independent news agencies, newspapers, radio and news sites. HealthMan strives to quote the Original Source. HealthMan compiles this information to provide the reader with a brief overview of the most recent events and developments as they are reported in the media. The views and opinions expressed in **Private Practice Review** are those of the authors of the media sources and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of HealthMan, its directors, employees and associates.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



'Even with no cash, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize clings to NHI'

"On social media, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize, wistfully drones on about how National Health Insurance (NHI) is his department's top priority, and how it will be "one of the best things that ever happened to SA". The crucial question is: with what money? – **Editorial Comment, *Financial Mail*** (5 March 2020).
 Meanwhile the country's economy has dipped into recession (for the second time in two years), after the fourth quarter GDP growth tanked by 1.4%.
"If government credibility is the critical question right now, Ramaphosa needs to clarify exactly how NHI will work, by when, and at what cost."

To read more, click on **ATTACHMENT FINMAIL**

ATTACHMENT FINMAIL

The Gathering 2020

"One word: Mistrust"

"That is what a panel discussion on South Africa's proposed NHI system during The Gathering 2020 zoomed in on and so captured a fundamental crack in South Africa's engagement and discourse on NHI and the NHI Bill," wrote **Alcestine October** in *City Press* (9 March 2020)

To read the article, click on: **ATTACHMENT NHI-MISTRUST**

ATTACHMENT NHI-MISTRUST

'Medical claims bill is out of hand'

"If the government is serious about improving the delivery of healthcare in the country, it has to move with speed to reduce the R100-bn medical claims bill," - editorial comment in *Cape Times* (3 March 2020).



In his recent Budget Speech, Finance Minister, **Tito Mboweni** said:

"In 2018/19, medico-legal claims' contingent liabilities reached R99.2-bn while medico-legal claim payments reached R2-bn. These payments are affecting the budgets of public facilities and, in turn, the delivery of services."
Cape Times: "The introduction of National Health Insurance will encounter serious challenges if measures are not implemented timeously to deal with rising medical claims. In times like these, when there are serious budgetary constraints, as Mboweni's Budget has demonstrated, we can't afford to fork out so much taxpayers' money due to health workers' negligence."

SPECIAL NEWS

MEDICAL Brief

Africa's Medical Media Digest

COVID-19 and SA GPs: Are they equipped and do they fully understand implications...?

SA Medical Association (SAMA) chair, Dr Angelique Coetzee – a Tshwane GP herself – doesn't seem to think so. In this exclusive interview with *Med Brief Africa*, co-editor Roy Watson, Dr Coetzee expresses her concerns on a number of issues.

RW: It's quite clear from recent media reports that you believe that many of our private-practising general practitioners (GPs) in South Africa are not only ill-equipped but are in fact not really aware of what they are in for in the event of a coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak here.

AC: That's right. In other countries, first world and in many others, most GPs are employed by their national health systems and as such are suitably equipped with all the protective gear such as masks etc. and directly with all the necessary advice and updates. That won't happen here with our private GPs, and that is one of my concerns.

RW: One of your concerns being the GP her- or himself contracting the virus?
AC: Yes. If employed by a national health insurer or NHS-type system, you will not only get the necessary equipment and support but will also still receive an income when in quarantine, self-incubated or otherwise. I have to add here that with the average age of our private GPs being 55, there are many fitting the virus profile of men between 56 and 60. Many could contract the virus, take it home to their families, have no income, and even die as a consequence.

To read more, click on the button below

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NEWS ON GOVERNMENT



'NHI unlikely to be implemented by 2026'

In his National Budget Speech in Parliament, Finance Minister **Tito Mboweni** announced that R3.9-bn is to be

cut from NHI expenditure. According to Mark Blecher, Treasury's chief director for health and social development, the Treasury has targeted underspending programmes for cuts to try to protect service delivery.

R1.4-bn has been shifted out of the NHI indirect grant, managed by the National Health Department, due to slow spending on contracting with GPs, mental health and oncology services. R56-m has been set aside over the medium-term to strengthen the Department's capacity to phase in NHI.

Although the health budget has increased by over R7-bn, this is a decrease in actual terms, said Director of Rural Health Advocacy Project (RHAP) Russell Rensburg – **News24** (27 February 2020).

"It is unlikely that the NHI will be fully implemented by 2026 as outlined in the bill," he remarked.

An amount of R25-m has been set aside for the National Quality Health Improvement Plan that is a project of the Presidency to improve the quality of healthcare facilities to ensure that they can be accredited for the NHI.

FINANCIAL NEWS

Sandoz to pay \$195m to settle price-fixing case



Novartis' Sandoz unit will pay \$195-m to settle US criminal charges that it conspired with other pharmaceutical companies to fix prices of generic drugs. Sandoz admitted that the sales affected by the conspiracies exceeded \$500-m and involved drugs for common skin conditions, high blood pressure and cystic fibrosis. Novartis said that Sandoz had co-operated with the government's investigation, and individuals implicated are no longer employed at the company.



Aspen sees risk and reward in Covid-19

Aspen CEO Stephen Saad told shareholders at the company's interim results presentation that, though the company does not have manufacturing operations in China, the virus outbreak would have consequences for it.

Aspen produces and supplies hospitals with anaesthetics but demand for these will be affected because patients are postponing operations. However, Aspen could benefit from increased demand for antibiotics and other drugs sparked by the Covid-19 outbreak.

• Aspen sold its Japanese operation for R4.6-bn reducing its debt by 2.8%. Aspen has cut its debt from R53.5-bn in December 2018 to R38.9-bn by the end of June 2019. The company's net borrowings now stand at R37.9-bn. The company has also exited its public sector antiretrovirals business in SA and has entered into an agreement with Indian producer Laurus to toll-manufacture antiretrovirals, reported **Business Day** (6 March 2020).



Ascendis stock up

Ascendis Health's stock increased nearly 30% on March 5, shortly after the release of its trading update, reported **Fin24** (6 March 2020).

Ascendis Health expects its revenue to be strengthened by higher sales in Europe, due to a new tender business secured by its Cyprian pharmaceutical business Remedica, and new product launches by its Romanian business Sun Wave Pharma. In 2019 Ascendis cancelled plans to dispose of Remedica, to deal with its debt burden.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

Safety concerns delay HIV drug



The DoH has asked the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to review its requirements for a cheaper pill (containing dolutegravir) for HIV patients.

According to the DOH's acting director-general, Anban Pillay, there has been a reluctance by prescribers and female patients to sign a form to access TLD [the new pill, which contains tenofovir, lamivudine and dolutegravir].

Successful implementation of the new treatment is crucial for the DoH, because it will save money as well as assure key donors such as the US Presidential Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) that it is making progress in bringing the HIV epidemic under control, reported **Business Day** (27 February 2020). TLD was launched by Health Minister, Zweli Mkhize, last November, but five provinces waited until this year to begin providing the drug.

GENERAL NEWS

Latest news on the CORONAVIRUS

Effect of the coronavirus on supply of medicines

Regarding the effect of the coronavirus on the supply of medicines and raw materials sourced from Asia, the chair of the Pharmaceutical Task Group, Stravos Nicolaou, said most companies have implemented risk assessments of their product portfolios and are liaising with the DoH. He said that although supply chains are potentially vulnerable, a sufficient pipeline of medicines exists in the country at least until the end of May.

In cases of emergencies, the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) has agreed to assist facilitation of medicine supplies from alternative sources. SAHPRA has also implemented a new system to expedite approval for API applications from drug firms applicable to new applications and requests to change suppliers.



Covid-19 in SA

On Thursday, March 5, SA became the seventh country in Africa to confirm a case of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak that started in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The first SA victim is a man who had travelled to Italy with a party of 10.

By March 11, the number of Covid-19 cases reported in South Africa has increased to 13. The new cases include 4 in Gauteng; 1 in KZN; and 1 in the Western Cape.

Why Africa isn't in virus' grip

In the latest edition of **The Lancet**, which looks into the preparedness and vulnerability of African countries and the coronavirus, SA, Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia and Nigeria are the African countries most at risk to the virus.

The researchers found that – according to estimates on the current situation – "the overall risk of importation to Africa is lower than that to Europe (1% vs 11%), respectively".

But they warn the continent's response and reaction capacity is lower than elsewhere.

Prof. Wolfgang Preiser, Stellenbosch University Medical Virology Division head, said it was difficult to say why the virus had yet to establish a foothold in Africa.

The Public Hotline number for info regarding the coronavirus is 0800 029 999 and operates from 8.00 to 16.00.

By Wednesday, March 11, the number of coronavirus cases reported worldwide, have increased to 119 292. The death count was 4 300 and 66 582 recoveries have been reported.



SA's adult obesity rate among the highest in Africa

SA's obesity-associated costs stood at \$3.5-bn (R53.9-bn) in 2016, according to the latest report from the World Obesity Federation. SA and Algeria are the two African countries with the highest rates of adult obesity. The prevalence of obesity among SA women was 41% in 2016 and is forecasted to rise to 46.7% in 2025, obesity among men is predicted to rise from 16% to 23.3% over the same period.

The obesity rate predicted for SA men are not far off the global average forecast for 2025, but the rate for women is more than double the anticipated global average of 21%.

The obesity federation's policy director, Hannah Brinsden, said many people – including healthcare professionals, policymakers and others – are guilty of seeing it as a simple lack of personal responsibility, but like all chronic diseases, the root causes of obesity run much deeper. They can be genetic, psychological, socio-cultural, economic and environmental.

NEWS ON MEDICAL SCHEMES



CMS asks nominations for LCBO committees

The CMS issued a circular on February 21, inviting nominations for two "stakeholder-based" advisory committees to work with it on developing a low-cost benefit option (LCBO) framework by the end of March 2021.

The nomination deadline was February 28. However, in December the CMS released a circular (80) that overturned a previous decision that permitted primary health insurance plans to remain in force under a new low-cost benefit regime is implemented. More than a dozen appeals have been lodged against circular 80 by medical schemes, insurers and the Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) and the Health Funders' Association.

Business Day (26 February) quoted Insight Actuaries & Consultants joint CEO, Barry Childs, saying the CMS should have published its analysis of the sector and consulted the industry before it issued circular 80. Consulting the industry at this stage did not alter the fact that circular 80 effectively scraps primary health insurance products and low-cost benefit options.

To read Patrick Masobe's article in **Business Day** (26 February 2020) click on **ATTACHMENT MASOBE**

ATTACHMENT MASOBE

Circulars from the CMS

The following Circulars were published by the CMS in February/March 2020.



10 of 2020
 Request for HIV, TB and STI DATA for the SA National Aids Council (SANAC)

15 of 2020
 Categorisation of assets in terms of Annexure B to the Regulations

11 of 2020
 Updated data specification for the costing of primary healthcare services

16 of 2020
 Annual Statutory Returns for the financial year ended 31 December 2019

12 of 2020
 LCBO and Demarcation Update

17 of 2020
 Healthcare Utilisation Annual Statutory Return for the financial year ending 31 December 2019

13 of 2020
 Entry and verification criteria for identifying beneficiaries with risk factors in medical schemes and the Risk Weighting and Count tables

18 of 2020
 Purchase of RA Gilbert Pharmacies by Platinum Health

14 of 2020
 Momentum Medical Scheme and BP Medical Aid Society amalgamation is confirmed

SPECIAL NOTES

Two locums urgently required for Private Psychiatric Practice

The Practice of Dr Nazeem Jamie Psychiatric Inc. is urgently looking for two psychiatrists to split consults. Applicants should preferably be female.

Monday-Thursday at the Goodwood Practice
 Physical address: N1 City Mews, Unit A11, Cnr. Frans Conradie & Manuss Gerber Drives, Goodwood

Friday at the Rondebosch Practice (to service patients in the Southern Suburbs)
 Physical address: Stonefontain Terrace, Suite 113, Summit Sessional Rooms, Rondebosch

The hours are flexible/negotiable and the rates negotiable.
 The locum will have use of Dr Jamie's full facilities including two staff members to be at their service etc. for all admin related functions.

For more info, contact
Tel: 021-595 2592/078 561 5625 or
Email: accounts@njamiapsych.co.za

Locum for Pulmonologist urgently required

The practice of Dr V Ballhausen has a locum vacancy for a Specialist Physician, Pulmonologist at his consulting rooms in Sunninghill Hospital.

Requirements:
 Applicant must be registered with the HPCSA
 Medical Insurance compulsory

For more info, contact **Susan: 011 806 1521/7 or**
Email: drballhausen@gmail.com

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