



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 and its staff, employees and associates.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



C-19 inflicts unkindest cut on patients needing surgery

"Hospitals' "drastic" cancellation of surgeries during the COVID-19 lockdown will add to SA's excess deaths as a result of the pandemic and increase inequality in healthcare," reported *Times Select* (30 July 2020). In an article published in the *SA Medical Journal*, lead author Kathryn Chu, professor of global surgery at Stellenbosch University, said the first 12 weeks of lockdown had left a backlog of more than 150 000 surgical cases.

To read more, click on the button below

Click this link

C-19: Financial Solutions for Cash-Strapped Private Practices



Doctors and specialists, in particular, have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, with consultations declining between 60% and 90%.

A proposal by the Progressive Health Forum (PHF), South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF), South African Medical and Dental Practitioners as well as the South African Medical Research Council that medical schemes contribute financial support to doctors during COVID-19 seemed "to have hit a wall", reported *Fin24* (31 July 2020).

"However, in a letter seen by *Fin24*, the Health Funders Association (HFA), an organisation that represents the interests of medical schemes, raised concerns about the proposal, asking for clarity on how the mechanism to finance doctors will work and how schemes will recover the money they have spent.

In its August newsletter, Surgicom gave an update on financial solutions for cash-strapped private practices.

To read the newsletter, click on the button below

Also read *Medical Brief's* SPECIAL NEWS in this issue

Read More

'Consumers may retain the right to choose their pharmacy'



In July Medical schemes' practices regarding closed Designated Service Providers (DSP) and penalty co-payments have been re-confirmed as undesirable business practices by Judge BM Ngoepe, chair of the Appeals Board.

"This appeal is part of a continuing and seemingly unending saga that has been unfolding over many years between ICPA and CMS," stated the ICPA in a media release. The Judge urged the CMS to speedily complete the process to declare the closed DSP and penalty co-payments an undesirable business practice.

"This will restore the rights of patients to not only select their healthcare professional of choice, but also ensure they do not encounter any unnecessary out-of-pocket payments."

Healthcare funders 'hit back'

"Healthcare funders have hit back at claims by the industry regulator that they are not acting in their members' best interests during the COVID-19 pandemic," reported *Times Live* (25 July 2020).

In a circular on July 23, the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) said only 19 schemes — including some of the biggest — had applied for exemptions to regulations that would allow them to waive contributions for members struggling to make ends meet. Those that had not done so, provided cover for just over four million people.

SPECIAL NEWS

Schemes' dilemma: Who to assist, members or providers...?



The unprecedented demand for financial assistance created by the novel COVID-19 pandemic has thrust South Africa's medical schemes into the horns of a dilemma: Who do they assist? Providers or their members?

They can't do both, participants in a recently HRM-hosted webinar were told by Christoff Raath, joint CEO of Insight Actuaries and Consultants. Raath presented an updated analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on medical schemes.

"It is simply not possible for schemes to provide assistance to providers and members simultaneously," he said, alluding firstly to the proposed Progressive Health Forum (PHF)-led capitation plan aimed at keeping private medical practitioners afloat while assisting the public sector with the COVID-19 response — i.e. a guaranteed capitation payment of 70% based on their 2019 claims; and secondly to suggestions that schemes either "freeze contributions" or at most, increase their 2021 contributions by 3,9% as recommended by the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS).

Read more

NEWS ON GOVERNMENT



State has yet to order Cipla's generic COVID-19 drug

All three of SA's private hospital groups have obtained supplies of *remdesivir*, the Indian drug manufacturer Cipla's cut-price generic version of the coronavirus drug. However, the company has not yet received orders from provincial health departments. - *Business Day* (4 August 2020). The first shipment of 24 000 vials arrived in SA and the remainder is expected to land within the next month.

According to Cipla SA's CEO, Paul Miller, *remdesivir* will be sold at the same price to state and private sector patients in SA: \$55 a shot, or \$330 (R5 684) for a five-day course.

Cipla's *remdesivir* has yet to be registered with SA's medicines regulator, the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority, but doctors may prescribe it in terms of section 21 of the Medicines and Related Substances Act.



Treasury considers centralising PPE procurement

Reports of widespread corruption in the government's procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), and other coronavirus-related goods, have prompted the National Treasury to investigate the possible centralisation of its procurement.

Politically well-connected individuals have been implicated in fraud regarding tenders and the Special Investigating Unit is looking into contracts awarded to 90 companies in Gauteng alone, worth altogether R2.2-bn.

Finance Minister ends emergency PPE procurement

On August 6, National Treasury ended the emergency procurement process for personal protective (PPE) and protective clothing, saying it's back to business as usual for government suppliers, reported *News24*.

"No sooner had Treasury announced the COVID-19 budget, than thieves were already assembled at the door, waiting to steal," said Finance Minister Tito Mboweni.

MRC hopeful that pandemic might have turned

According to the latest weekly mortality report from the Medical Research Council (MRC) natural deaths — those caused by infectious diseases or conditions such as cancer and diabetes — fell from a high of 15 524 in the week beginning July 15 to 14 497 in the week of July 22, and continued to decline to 13 798 in the week of July 29, a drop of 11.1%. The MRC estimates there were 33 478 excess deaths between May 6 and August 4, close to four times more than the official COVID-19 death tally of 8 884 on August 4.

FINANCIAL NEWS



'Health bet about to pay off'

Growthpoint Properties' has a R470-m project in its pipeline: the state-of-the-art Cintocora Hospital, under construction in Pretoria. The hospital will specialise in head, neck, spinal, neuro and vascular surgery. Growthpoint launched its healthcare real estate investment trust (REIT) just over two years ago with assets of close to R2.2-bn, reported *Financial Mail* (13 August 2020). The unlisted REIT, known as Growthpoint Healthcare Property Holdings, owns four hospitals and one set of medical chambers.

"Healthcare REITs may be unfamiliar territory for SA investors, but it's an asset class that is fast gaining popularity globally."

RH Bophelo is ready for NHI

The small hospital group, RH Bophelo, which listed on the JSE in 2017, has set its sights on establishing itself as a force in the healthcare industry. "At the heart of its strategy are the country's small urban areas where people do not have access to private healthcare facilities and partnerships with the government and NHI," reported *Fin24* (5 August 2020).

According to CEO Quinton Zunga the group is targeting the uninsured, but employed market of about three million.

The group's growth strategy is also meant to ready it for the NHI, which is set to be fully implemented in 2020.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

Global fight over a vaccine may get ugly



"Healthy countries have already locked up more than a billion doses of coronavirus vaccines, raising worries that the rest of the world will be at the back of the queue in the global effort to defeat the pathogen," reported *Bloomberg* (2 August 2020).

The US, Britain, EU and Japan have so far secured about 1.3-bn doses of potential COVID immunisations, according to London-based analytics firm Afirmity. A few front-runners are already in final-stage studies, fuelling hopes that a vaccine will be available soon.

Worldwide supply may not reach 1-bn doses until the first quarter of 2022, according to Afirmity. Meanwhile an initiative, known as Covax, aims to give governments an opportunity to hedge the risk of backing unsuccessful candidates and give other nations with limited finances access to shots that would be otherwise unaffordable.

GENERAL NEWS



Telemedicine could be the next big thing

In SA the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the partnership between Vodacom and Discovery, in order to provide free online doctors' consultations, as a private sector intervention to relieve the pressures on the health system, reported *Fin24* (7 August 2020). Several Apps, like Hello Doctor, can also be downloaded, enabling patients to get instant access to healthcare.

On April 3, the Health Professions Council of South Africa, amended the telemedicine guidelines to state: "Telehealth should preferably be practised in circumstances where there is an already established practitioner-patient relationship. Where such a relationship does not exist, practitioners may still consult using Telehealth, provided that such consultations are done in the best clinical interest of patients."

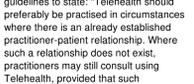
Blood test heralds new era in Alzheimer's diagnosis

A new blood test may be able to diagnose Alzheimer's disease with astonishing accuracy, according to a study by Swedish researchers. The test not only differentiates between Alzheimer's and other types of dementia, but also detects signs of Alzheimer's two decades before symptoms appeared in people who were genetically predisposed to develop it by measuring levels of a specific tau protein, called p-tau217, - *Health24* (6 August 2020).

According to Dr Michael Weiner, an Alzheimer's disease researcher at the University of California, San Francisco the test very accurately predicts who has got Alzheimer's disease in their brain, including people who seem to be normal.

Alzheimer's is an incurable disease that affects an estimated 5.8 m Americans aged 65 and older.

NEWS ON MEDICAL SCHEMES



Temporary suspension of Government Employees Medical Schemes hospital network rules

GEMS has informed its members that, due to the increase in COVID-19 infections, the Scheme has decided to temporarily suspend its hospital network rules in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Gauteng Provinces only.

"The non-network co-payment of R12 000 will be overridden for all medical and emergency pre-admissions at non-network hospitals with effect from 20 July until 30 September 2020. Pre-authorisation for elective surgical cases and future dated admissions will continue to be managed in line with the existing GEMS Network Rules, where co-payment overrides will be managed on a case by case basis in line with managed care processes."

COVID-19 claims life of second CMS Chairperson

Prof Lungile Pepeta, chairperson of the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) died of COVID-19. He was appointed chairperson in June, after the death of former chairperson Dr Clarence Mini who also succumbed to the virus. Pepeta, a renowned paediatric cardiologist, helped spearhead the response to C-19, reported *News24* (9 August 2020).

Circulars from the CMS

The following Circulars were published by the CMS between July and August 2020.



48 of 2020
Currently unregulated entities - Optometry benefit management service organisations

51 of 2020
Live Webinars for Healthcare Brokers 2020

49 of 2020
Evaluation of cost increase assumptions by medical schemes for the 2020 financial year

52 of 2020
Guidance on benefit changes and contribution increases for 2021

50 of 2020
Industry Update on Developments Relating to COVID-19 Exemptions and Guidelines

53 of 2020
Proposed amalgamation between Sizwe Medical Fund and Hosmed Medical Scheme: 1 August

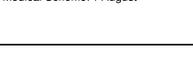
SPECIAL NOTES

Quality approved KN95 masks for sale

PRICE PER MASK: R18.72 incl VAT
UNIT PRICE (pack of 10): R187.20 incl VAT

AVAILABILITY FROM PARTICIPATING WHOLESALEERS: KwaZulu

ESTIMATED DATE OF AVAILABILITY: From 6 August
ORDER STOCK CODE: Z105029
CONTACT NUMBER: 011 608 1170
CONTACT EMAIL: Sales@kendon.co.za



TRENITE KN95 mask - SAHPRA licensed supplier - FDA/CE validated certification

- Chinese National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment Test report
- SABS inspection report - SANS 50149 approved test report (Protochnik)

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