HEALTHMAN PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW: October 2018

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PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW

October 2018

A summary of breaking news and general information regarding healthcare in the public and private sector, published in the media.

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Food for Thought

SAMA calls for 'Codesa' for NHI issues

In a submission to the National Department of Health (DoH), the South African Medical Association (SAMA) says the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill and other parallel reform processes do not seem to have the interests of health providers at heart.

Evaluation reports of the NHI pilot programme show that many pilot facilities fell short on a range of issues, typifying the severe challenges in the public healthcare system.
SAMA therefore called for a re-opening of NHI consultations with doctors (and the wider society), to allow the profession to register its concerns and propound its ideal NHI model.

These consultations, which SAMA says must be instituted by Parliament, should resemble the ongoing land appropriation hearings, and must be at provincial level (provincial NHI workshops or imbizo's). SAMA said a "Codesa" for NHI should be instituted to allow exhaustive debate.
- Alf James: *Business Day Insights*, 4 October 2018

Read more in the attached document

News on Government

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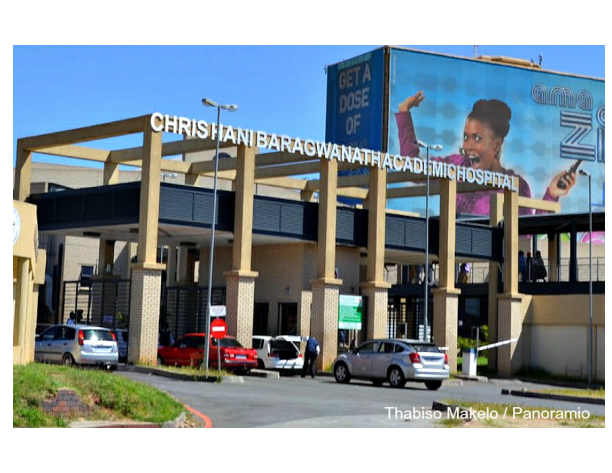
Thabiso Makelo / Panoramio

Nursing proposal to cure unemployment

A proposal to train and employ 50 000 new nurses was on the table at the government's Jobs Summit in Midrand early in October. SA is short of 47 000 nurses.

Earlier, Pres Cyril Ramaphosa announced that he had instructed Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi to urgently fill 2 200 nursing vacancies as part of the government's R50-bn economic recovery package.

Netcare has developed a project to provide employment to 50 000 people. The proposal is based on a collaborative approach between government, organised labour, community and the private sector, with all regulatory bodies working together to achieve this much-needed outcome.

Research undertaken by the SA Nursing Council also alluded to cohorts of nurses and nursing assistants who had qualified in the 2014/2015 period, with a number of them remaining unemployed, despite an indication from the DoH that there was a shortage in the profession.

These nurses would have to be taught additional skills, and nurses currently registered would also have to be educated and promoted to become specialist nurses.

Bara maternity staff 'clueless' about infection

According to a new study medical staff at SA's busiest maternity unit at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital are virtually clueless about a common infection that can endanger the lives of newborns.

Two-thirds of doctors and almost all nurses failed to correctly name a single risk factor for group B streptococcal disease in babies.

A team of researchers from the Wits University medical school said the level of ignorance they detected "suggest failures of implementation of a risk-based strategy over many years".

NHI budget underspent R82-m

In his audit report, recently submitted to Parliament, Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu revealed that the DoH has underspent the budget on NHI by R82-m in 2017-18.

The DoH allocated R166-m for the NHI information system, but spent only R83.8-m. It blamed delays in infrastructure projects on technical compliance complexity, delays in awarding projects to contractors and contractual issues with some contractors for the problem.

Financial News

Big hospitals reject break-up idea

SA's largest hospital groups have rejected proposals that they be broken up in order to lower health-care costs, calling the idea drastic and "perhaps unconstitutional". This follows the Health Market Inquiry recommending divestiture and a moratorium on new licences for SA's biggest hospital groups, Netcare, Life Healthcare and Mediclinic Southern Africa.

Divestiture would see hospital groups letting go of or selling some assets or business units. However, the recommendation does not elaborate on how the divestiture could work.

Speaking at the annual Hospital Association of SA (HASA) conference in Joburg, Anthony Norton, director of law firm Nortons (representing Netcare), said the recommendation was a non-starter.

The recommendation for a moratorium means Netcare, Life Healthcare and Mediclinic Southern Africa would not be granted licences for new facilities nor permission to increase the number of beds in their existing facilities until the market share of each hospital group was 20% by number of beds.

- The inquiry's recommendations come as the share prices of some the country's largest hospital groups are under pressure. Life Healthcare's shares have weakened 8.70% in the past year, while Mediclinic's valuation has plunged 26.78% over the same period. Netcare has dropped by 4.38%.

AfroCentric takes control of Activo

Afrocentric, the owner of Medscheme and Pharmaceutical Direct, is positioning itself to compete with pharmaceutical giants after announcing that it has agreed to acquire a further 74% stake in drug-importing company Activo.

The black-owned investment company, which is partly owned by Sanlam, already owns 26% of Activo. Getting full control of the company will make it a significant player in the pharmaceutical industry.

Special News

Honouring SA Doctors with Doctors Day

In recognition of the critical role that South African doctors play in the healthy functioning of South African society, 16 November has been declared National Doctors Day.

"Doctors play a critical role in meeting the healthcare needs of our nation," says Dr Bettina Taylor, clinical risk specialist at EthiQal, a division of Constantia Insurance Company, the company at the head of the campaign

The Doctors Day campaign aims to create awareness around the need to protect and appreciate South African doctors, and to assure them that their contributions are recognised and valued. Moreover, it's to encourage stakeholders to come up with solutions that will aid doctors and doctors-in-training in overcoming industry challenges.

Constantia Insurance urges all South Africans to show appreciation to their doctor on Doctors Day, or to share stories of how a doctor has positively impacted their lives.

Read more in the attached document

16 NOVEMBER
National Doctors' Day
Caring for those who care for us.
We'd like to say thank you, every year on the 16th of November.
Proudly brought to you by
ETHIQAL
MEDICAL RISK PROTECTION
Doctors' Day
CONSTANTIA
Insurance made personal
EthiQal is a division of Constantia Insurance Company Limited. An Authorised Financial Services Provider. FSP No. 31111.

HMI findings and recommendations don't support real evidence: Experts

A lot of the work contained in the Health Market Inquiry's (HMI) Provisional Report is deficient and defective and needs to be reviewed to determine whether the real evidence supports the findings and if certain recommendations are appropriate, practical and feasible.

This is according to Anthony Norton, Director of law firm Nortons Inc who has been representing Netcare in the work around the inquiry. He was one of two speakers delivering an expert opinion on the HMI report at this week's HASA conference in Johannesburg.

Norton and Econex MD, Prof Nicola Theron (on behalf of Mediclinic) expressed serious concerns about the report, particularly around the findings relating to the concentration of the three major private hospital groups, supply-induced demand and pricing, and recommendations proposing the establishment of a supply-side regulator, divestiture by the three major hospital groups and price regulation.

They pointed out that old data were used to come to conclusions of market concentration, showing that since 2014 the total market share of Netcare, Mediclinic and Life Healthcare has shrunk to below the almost 90%, indicated in the HMI report, to around 75% as hospitals in the National Health Network (NHN) and other independent hospitals added almost 1297 new beds compared to the total of 846 beds added by the three biggest groups. Data on hospital beds used by the HMI only cover 2010 to 2014.

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Pharmaceutical News

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Shortage of drugs at SA hospitals

The most common and cheapest breast cancer drugs have been out of stock or running very low at Chris Hani Baragwanath clinic - in Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The clinic, which serves about 1 700 breast cancer patients and survivors, is believed to be out of tamoxifen, a drug taken by 75% of women with breast cancer.

Stockouts of antiretrovirals (ARVs), contraceptive injections and a TB vaccine are worse than normal, said a number of doctors working in government hospitals and clinics.

New vaccine could give TB the needle

New research, the M72/AS01E Vaccine study, shows that the vaccine has an efficacy of about 50%.

Professor Mark Hatherill, director of the SA Tuberculosis Initiative at UCT, said:

"This is particularly ground-breaking because these results showed for the first time that it is possible for a new vaccine to protect people who are already infected with TB, from progressing from a state of infection to a state of disease."

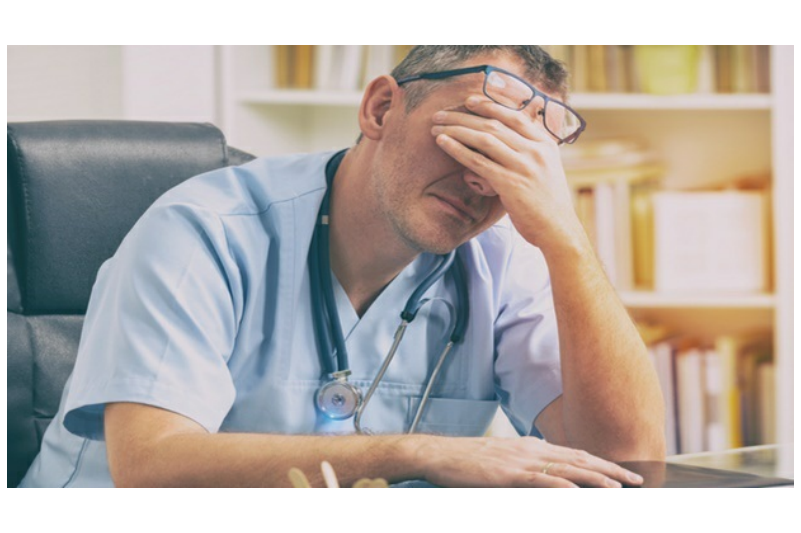
ATM pharmacy launches in Bloemfontein

Twin City Mall in Bloemfontein is the newest site for the innovative ATM pharmacy that gives patients with chronic illnesses repeat medication in under five minutes.

The Pharmacy Dispensing Unit (PDU) was unveiled on 25 September, during Pharmacy Month.

The first such dispensing unit was launched in Alexandra in Gauteng in March this year.

General News



Burnout pushing doctors over the edge

Burnout among doctors is so widespread that researchers who examined 182 studies involving 109 628 physicians in 45 countries are calling for the development of diagnostic criteria for the condition.

They say burnout, which has been associated with medical errors and lapses in professionalism, should be referred to and managed as a form of depression instead of as a "distinct entity".

Doctors in emergency units, general surgery, urology and general medicine are likely to experience more symptoms of burnout than their counterparts in other disciplines. Overall, burnout prevalence ranged from zero to 80.5%, and on average 73% of doctors reported emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and low personal accomplishment.

SAMA chairperson, Dr Mzukisi Grootboom, said burnout is so severe, particularly among young doctors, that there are growing reports of individuals resorting to substance abuse to "escape" work-related stress and exhaustion.

Self-check-up Apps

A free app that lets patients do quick health check-ups on themselves is the centrepiece of a Gates Foundation-backed project to bring better care to poor regions of Africa and eastern Europe. The medical app will be the first of its kind available in Swahili, and will also be offered free in Romania, tech start-up Ada Health GmbH said. The project, also receiving funding from the Swiss-based Foundation Botnar, will open up Ada's artificial-intelligence-enabled health advice to some 2-m people in areas with little access to hospitals.

News on Medical Aids

Cost of medical aid deters membership

According to the CMS's annual report the number of medical scheme beneficiaries remained virtually unchanged for the past seven years with high unemployment and lack of government intervention said to be keeping membership out of reach of a growing slice of the population.

There were 8.87-m medical scheme beneficiaries in 2017, compared with 8.53-m in 2011; while the country's population grew from 51.55-m to 56.84-m according to Stats SA.

Wits University professor Alex van den Heever said the lack of growth in medical scheme membership reflects the poor state of the economy and the government's failure to take steps to make membership more affordable.

CMS Annual Report 2017-2018 will be publicly launched on 17 October 2018.

HEALTHCARE

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Medical aid costs rocket

Most local medical aids have announced their increases for next year, with the average spike being about 9%, according to Victor Crouser of Alexander Forbes Health. Jill Larkan, head of healthcare consulting at GTC, a financial services firm, said the average annual medical aid premium increased 104.87% cumulatively from 2006 to 2016; which is more than the increase in salaries.

Bonitas' average increase is 8.9%; Discovery Health: 8.9% - 9.2%; Fedhealth: 8.5; Sizwe: 6.1%; Thebemed 6.5%; and Momentum Health: 10.7%

Complaints about Health Inspectorate

The Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) - the statutory body charged with assessing the quality of hospitals and clinics - is so short-staffed it responded to just half of patients', CEO Siphiwe Mndaweni told Parliament.

The OHSC received 1 122 complaints during the 2017-2018 financial year, compared with 730 complaints the year before.

The number of complaints increased partly in response to the highly publicised Life Esidimeni scandal, in which 144 state mental patients died, said Mndaweni.

Judge removes Samwumed curator

A High Court judge has removed the provisional curator of medical scheme Samwumed, who he found was incurring "exorbitant" but "unproductive" expenses that were not helping to solve the scheme's problems. Judge AJ Engers found "good cause" to remove Duduza Khosana, who was earning R234 000 a month and has incurred expenses of at least R100 000 since her appointment at the 80 000-member Samwumed in May

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Circulars:Council for Medical Schemes

The following Circulars were published by the CMS in October 2018.
Visit www.medicalschemes.co.za for more info.

41 of 2018
Internet Service Provider Cut-Over

42 of 2018
Draft Medical Schemes Consolidation Framework

43 of 2018
Request for HIV, TB and STI DATA for SANAC

44 of 2018
Postponement of te Principal Officers and Board of Trustees forum sessions for October 2018

45 of 2010
International Travel benefit

46 of 2018
Standard Guidelines on format of Business Plans for the registration of a new medical scheme, new/restructured benefit options, Regulation 29, Amalgamations, Reinsurance and Standard Management Accounts

47 Of 2018
Proposed purchase of the administration and managed care business of Sanlam Health Administrators Proprietary Limited/Sanlam Managed Care Proprietary by Chartered Accounts (SA) Medical Aid Fund

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Special Notices

Psychiatry Practice
Locum Position Available

A Locum position is available at a Psychiatry Practice in the Strand/Somerset West area from January 2019 to the end of April 2019.
Applicants can apply to do only a part of the 4 months.

Please contact Practice Administration at: chris@ludwick.co.za

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