



PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW

How long will the lockdown last?

The *Financial Mail* (7 April 2020) speculates that there is a 5% likelihood that Pres Cyril Ramaphosa will open up the lockdown after April 21; a 50% likelihood that it will be extended; a 15% chance that the lockdown could be opened up for a bit and then implemented again in 1 - 2 weeks; and a 30% chance that some of the restrictions would be phased out, but that the country will be ready to return to full lockdown if necessary.

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.

Content

Food for Thought
News on Government
Financial News
Pharmaceutical News

General News
News on Medical Schemes
Special Notes

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Corona and the SA economy

"Whether the pandemic, and the massive job losses will help focus the minds of civil servants amid government's crucial bid to reduce its wage bill, remains to be seen," wrote **Helena Wasserman, News24** (3 April 2020)



About healthcare, Wasserman wrote:

"Lofty plans for a new South African national health system will probably fall victim to new post-virus realities. There won't be any money left for it. **"But in its place could come much tighter public-private cooperation as government and companies seem to work closely together in the fight against the pandemic.**"

"Private hospitals report that they have started treating state patients for COVID-19 and it seems as if government is working with them to coordinate resources. This could forge new relationships and cooperation in future, and the clear way Health Minister Zweli Mkhize led from the front should assuage distrust in government's motivations among private players. That said, we may only be at the start of this calamity, and there are no assurances that the health system will hold up as the virus starts spreading in the colder winter months and among South Africa's most at-risk population."

To read the article, click on Helena Wasserman below

Helena Wasserman

'COVID-19 will permanently change SA's healthcare landscape'

"While the COVID-19 outbreak is going to require massive healthcare resources to deal with, and stretch the health system to breaking point, it may well amount to positive industry changes in the long run," wrote **Dr Johann Serfontein in MedBrief** (1 April 2020).



"The COVID-19 outbreak has already done more in two weeks to acquire public sector patient access to private facilities than 10 years of National Health Insurance (NHI) planning and pilot projects have done."

To read more, click on JSerfontein below

JSerfontein

COVID-19 provides valuable insights needed to implement NHI



"How we respond to the COVID-19 epidemic will be important in determining how effective we are in dealing with this and the inevitable future epidemics," **The Citizen** (6 April 2020).

"However, how we deal with this epidemic could also play a key role in modelling some of the essential features of our future healthcare system. As the national response to the COVID-19 crisis is showing us, only a rapid and effective removal of the separation between the public and private service delivery systems in South Africa can achieve an optimal nationwide response, not only to this and the inevitable future epidemics, but also pave the way towards universal healthcare in future."

To read more, click on The Citizen

The Citizen

NEWS ON GOVERNMENT

Minister Mkhize promises health workers will be protected

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize assured healthcare professionals that they would have all the equipment they need to protect themselves against COVID-19, promising that no-one would be forced to work without proper gear.



This follows the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) requesting the Labour Court to order the DoH to "meaningfully engage" with its members in order to ensure they have the right equipment and that no-one is compelled to work without it.

- Meanwhile the first consignment of protective equipment from China was received on April 7. The order - worth R69-m - was funded by the Solidarity Fund, billionaire Patrice Motsepe's philanthropic organisation, FirstRand and Naspers. A total of R750-m has been made available.



Hospital temporarily shut down

On April 9, it was reported that the KwaZulu-Natal's Health Department has temporarily shut down the Netcare St Augustine's Hospital in Durban, following an outbreak of more than 60 cases of COVID-19. According to Health Minister Zweli Mkhize there are 66 confirmed cases,

including 48 staff. However, a Netcare statement reported that 47 of the hospital's staff had tested positive and 15 current patients were being treated for COVID-19. Four deaths were reported.

- The Duzduza Clinic in Ekurhuleni has been closed indefinitely after a nurse tested positive for COVID-19. The clinic and surrounding area will be sanitised and staff have been placed in self-quarantine awaiting test results..Two mobile clinics will be deployed to the area to attend to the community's medical needs.

FINANCIAL NEWS

Afrocentric reports 'unprecedented' sales of multivitamins in March

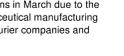
AfroCentric's share price surged on Friday, April 3rd with 14.92% to R3.39, putting it on track for its best one-day performance since October 2018.



The company reported "unprecedented" sales of multivitamins in March due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This increase in demand at its pharmaceutical manufacturing division, Active Health, is expected to continue in April as courier companies and pharmacies seek to increase stock levels.

Financial sector comes to the party

Nedbank, the KwaZulu-Natal Doctors' Healthcare Coalition, Usizo Advisory Solutions and Vula have launched a "Doctors on Call" hotline to all South Africans. More than 450 medical doctors across the country have



voluntarily committed their time and expertise. Callers pay the normal cost of a call but don't pay to talk to the doctor. The doctors have been trained according to national health guidelines and standard operating processes and provide advice according to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases regulations.

- Meanwhile **Old Mutual** stepped up its contribution against the spread of the coronavirus, pledging R4-bn in life cover for healthcare professionals who are working on the front lines of the pandemic in SA. The cover is free for 430 000 registered health workers and was neither a product nor a policy.

- Old Mutual is also supporting national initiatives to access personal protective equipment for essential service workers such as face masks, gloves and hand sanitiser to the tune of R5-m.



Discovery, Vodacom team up to help

Discovery and Vodacom announced that they will cooperate to offer the public free virtual consultations with doctors to help diagnose and treat those exhibiting symptoms of the coronavirus.

The cost of the consultation will be funded by Discovery and Vodacom. The data used during the consultation, if individuals use the Vodacom network to do so, will also be free. The public can go on to Discovery's or Vodacom's website, as well as use the Discovery app, to begin self-screening. Vodacom also expects to make the service available shortly via the USSD (quick code) of *111#.

Telkom develops track-and-trace platform to assist

On April 2, **BusinessLIVE** reported that Telkom, together with the NICD and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has developed a new track-and-trace platform to help the fight against COVID-19. Telkom Mobile will provide the actual mobile location sites that will enhance the ability to build a "heat map of where the virus may probably be spreading to". The system collates multiple data sources such as geographic information systems to track an infected person's exposure and who they may have exposed to the coronavirus.



DisChem offers drive-through testing

DisChem has launched six drive through testing stations in the fight against COVID-19.

Some of these are in Centurion Mall, Olympus, Fourways and Buebird Centre Ahol in Gauteng. The stations are situated in parking areas at the designated centres where its stores are located. The tests will cost R850 each and it may take 24 to 48 hours to get your results back.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

Warning against rapid blood tests

The SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) warned the public not to use rapid blood tests for COVID-19, as they may be inaccurate and unable to detect the disease in its early stages. SAHPRA has appealed to the public to report companies or individuals selling rapid blood tests for COVID-19, as none were approved for use in SA.



Major score for SA against COVID-19?

"A new study by scientists at the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) could indicate a major score for SA in the fight against COVID-19," reported **Times Select** (6 April 2020).

The study suggests that countries with a longstanding and successful BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guérin) vaccination programme - which SA has had since 1973 - are faring far better against the virus than those that don't. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), BCG coverage in SA has remained between 80% and 90%.

Countries without universal policies of BCG vaccination (like Italy, the Netherlands and the US) have been more severely affected.

GENERAL NEWS



SA researcher dies from COVID-19

On March 31, the renowned SA HIV researcher, Professor Gita Ramjee, died from COVID-19-related complications. Ramjee was involved in almost every major HIV prevention trial on microbicides and focused on developing technologies for women. She joined the SA Medical Research Council (MRC) in 1996 and later became

director of its HIV prevention research unit before taking up the role of chief scientist at the Aurum Institute. Ramjee was the recipient of numerous awards for her research, including the Outstanding Female Scientist award of the European Development Clinical Trials Partnership, the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2012 International Microbicide Conference, and the 2017 MRC Scientific Merit Award gold medal.

'Nifty box' to protect frontline staff

Emergency doctors at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital in Johannesburg came up with an innovation to protect healthcare workers from Covid-19, called "Intubox".



Thanks to private sector funding from Firstrand, Spire, and Paramount aeronautical engineers the project was rolled out in the hospital.

The device limits contact with patients and can be used in any intubation, extubation or aerosolising procedures. It can also be used in theatre by anaesthetists, in ICU for critical care of patients, and in COVID-19 wards with patients on high-flow oxygen as well as on drug-resistant TB patients.

Two samples of the box are currently being used at Charlotte Maxeke and another 500 boxes will be distributed to hospitals across Gauteng.

By Thursday, April 9th, the number of coronavirus cases reported in South Africa have increased to 1 845 and the death toll was 18. Worldwide the number of cases have increased to 1 537 913 and 89 957 deaths have been reported. 340 452 patients have recovered.

NEWS ON MEDICAL SCHEMES

Grumbling over lower virtual rates

The SA Medical Association (SAMA) has objected strongly to the decision by Discovery Health and Medscheme to pay less for telemedicine consultations covered by their client schemes than they do for face-to-face interaction.



Discovery Health, with 19 client schemes including Discovery Health Medical Scheme (DHMS), set virtual consultation rates at 65% of those usually provided for face-to-face consultations. Medscheme is also paying less for virtual consultations as indicated by SAMA chair, Angelique Coetzee, said the organisation's members are unhappy because medical schemes have not provided a rationale for the lower rate, or indicated a willingness to negotiate.

Discovery Health CEO, Pieter Noach, said the lower rate applies to all disciplines, including general practitioners (GPs) and specialists, since virtual consultations are shorter, have lower input costs, and do not require consumables such as tongue depressors, swabs, and gloves.

Discovery Health is also reviewing the rates for mental health practitioners and considering adjusting to the full rate. The rate for doctors consulting on Discovery's DrConnect (online platform) has been increased to 75% of the in-room consultation rates.

'Key medical schemes still dominating sector'

"There has been a distinct trend of consolidation among private medical schemes in South Africa, especially in terms of restricted schemes (not open to the public)," reported **Fin24** (4 April 2020).

According to Zaid Saeed, senior actuarial specialist in the Alexander Forbes health team, this resulted in a shift in market share with basically two dominant players - Discovery, dominating the open scheme side and the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) dominating the restricted scheme side.

"Growth in market share is allowing a scheme to have greater negotiating power for favourable tariffs and can pass that on to its members. But it can also lead to concerns about consumer choice," Saeed said.

Circulars from the CMS

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



19 of 2020
Healthcare Provider Satisfaction Survey

24 of 2020
COVID-19 Update

20 of 2020
Demarcation Products Member Survey

25 of 2020
COVID-19 Lockdown measures

21 of 2020
List of registered schemes for 2020

26 of 2020
Proposed amalgamation between Bestmed Medical Scheme and Grintex (GEMAS) 1 July 2020

22 of 2020
Imposition of Levies 2020/21

27 of 2020
Extension to Annual Statutory returns for financial year ending 31 December 2019

23 of 2020
Notice to Medical Schemes for annual meetings and elections

SPECIAL NOTES

Established psychiatric practice for sale/ Locum to eventually take over practice

"I have been in private practice for 9 years and am looking for someone to take over my practice as I am relocating. I have an extensive patient database with a range of general psychiatric patients needing continuation of care."

The practice is currently situated in Newlands, Cape Town, but new premises would be needed as I am working from home and will be selling my property. Experienced receptionist also available.

Please contact **Dr Judy Bentley directly** – 083 988 7383 or 021 671 0082.

To advertise in **Private Practice Review** please contact: maretha@healthman.co.za

PrivateView and Private Practice Review provide news and opinion articles as a service to our members to enhance their understanding of the health care industry. The information contained in these publications is published without warranties of any kind, either express or implied. HealthView and Private Practice Review are published solely for informational purposes and should not be construed as advice or recommendations. Individuals should take into account their own unique and specific circumstances in acting on any news or articles published. Other than articles originally from sources outside our organization that are reported in the national press. Consequently, any information, trademarks, service marks, product names or named features are assumed to be the property of their respective owners, and are used solely for informative purposes in our publications. There is furthermore no implied endorsement of any of the products, goods or services mentioned in our publications.