



## PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW

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*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 broad 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



## National Health Insurance: The Politicking Continues Unabated

**"How the government thinks it can establish a new healthcare system on the ruins of the old one, without involving doctors in the process, boggles the mind," writes Dr Johann Serfontein, senior healthcare consultant at HealthMan.**

The Davis Tax Commission recommendations report (2017) stated that "the proposed NHI, in its current format, is unlikely to be sustainable unless there is sustained economic growth." **That was before the economy shrunk by 16% last quarter.** The recommendations were ignored.

\*In COVID, tariffs for doctors were determined without even speaking to them. Doctors in the frontline trenches were simply informed of the fee.

To read more, click on the button below

Read More

## MORE OPINIONS:

\* **Rob Rose, Editor of Financial Mail**  
 Rose published an editorial opinion under the heading: *The sins of COVID-19 have made NHI an even more unlikely fantasy.* He writes: "Some politicians are spinning the yarn that COVID-19 shows SA can manage immense healthcare projects — where were they when all the looting was taking place?"

\* **Prof Alex van den Heever, Wits University's School of Governance:**  
 "Funding NHI now, with a brittle economy, would be entirely inconceivable. Fiscally, it is a non-starter. During the Level 5 Lockdown, SA was losing R13-billion per day, so we are not in a position to raise more money for NHI from taxes, and we cannot borrow more."

\* **Dr Aslam Dasoo, co-convenor of the Progressive Health Forum and member of the ANC Stalwarts and Veterans group:**  
 "COVID-19 has pushed the idea of NHI further away than we can imagine. But there is still a political commitment to it."

TO READ THESE OPINIONS: Click on the links below

Rob Rose

Alex vd Heever

Aslam Dasoo

## NEWS ON GOVERNMENT

## Health Minister disbands Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19



"Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has effectively disbanded government's chief scientific advisory committee on COVID-19," reported *News24* (26 September 2020).

Although the entire 50-member MAC seems to be affected, it has been confirmed that 14 members of the MAC had received letters from Mkhize, thanking them for their "commitment and dedication".

"The new members of the MAC will assume duty soon," the letter reads.

Leading researcher Prof Shabir Madhi; the CEO of the SA Medical Research Council, Prof Glenda Gray; head of the Ezimshana health unit at Wits, Prof Francois Venter; and Dr Angehlique Goetzee, chairperson of the SA Medical Association are among the 14 members of the MAC who have received letters. Venter and Gray have been leading voices in criticising governments COVID-19 regulations during the lockdown.

On September 14, it was announced that the MAC will be reconfigured.



## Sin taxes will not be set aside for NHI, says Mkhize

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize told parliament that alcohol and other sin taxes will not be used to help fund the country's National Health Insurance (NHI).

This follows heated debates about the role of the alcohol brewery industry in society and the economy after governments harsh restrictions on the sale and distribution of alcohol during the pandemic.

Mkhize said the Department of Health (DoH) has previously raised the earmarking of sin taxes - including alcohol, tobacco and sugar - as an option with the Treasury. However, the Treasury has been hesitant to accept earmarking such funds, saying that to do so would introduce rigidities in the budgetary process, limiting the availability of funds for other and sometimes more urgent purposes.



## SA's waning epidemic remains a mystery

According to the latest COVID-19 report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) the number of reported cases in SA has dropped by 42% during the two weeks to September 10. The C-19 death rate has dropped by 29%. Statistics released by Health Minister Zweli Mkhize on Monday, September 14, show that the median test positivity rate fell to 3.8%, compared with 11.4% the week before. At that stage SA had 650 749 confirmed cases, with 956 new cases identified. Gauteng has reported the majority of cases at 33.1%, KZN is at 17.9%, and the Western Cape at 16.7%.

According to leading epidemiologist and infectious diseases specialist, Prof Saimi Abdool Karim, SA is on its way to reaching the threshold of a country with low-level C-19 transmission. But, he said, the country is not out of the woods just yet.

## C-19 numbers fall, but future remains uncertain

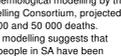
"Maybe most important for now, is that fewer people are dying from C-19 than two months ago," wrote **Matcus Lew** in *Spotlight* (21 September 2020)

In its latest weekly mortality report, the SA Medical Research Council estimates that there were around 44 400 excess natural deaths in SA since early May.

The early epidemiological modelling by the SA C-19 Modelling Consortium, projected between 34 000 and 50 000 deaths. Government's modelling suggests that around 12-m people in SA have been infected (around 20% of the population).

However, based on current evidence from other countries, it would be foolhardy to assume we will be spared a substantial second wave, wrote Low.

## Tragic death of Dr Abdulhay Munshi: HPCSA writes a letter to Pres Cyril Ramaphosa



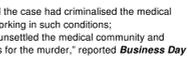
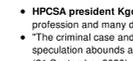
In a letter to Pres Cyril Ramaphosa, the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) complained about the "lack of action" by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the Minister of Justice, following the death of Dr Abdulhay Munshi (left in picture), who was shot dead last week. Dr Munshi and Dr Peter Beale (right in picture) were charged with culpable homicide, following the death of a prominent businessman's 10-year-old son after an operation. Meanwhile, paediatric surgeon, Prof Peter Beale, has gone into hiding.

• **HPCSA president Kgosi Letlape** said the case had criminalised the medical profession and many doctors feared working in such conditions.

• "The criminal case and shooting have unsettled the medical community and speculation abounds about the motives for the murder," reported *Business Day* (21 September 2020);

• **SAPPF chief executive, Dr Chris Archer**, described Munshi as "dedicated to his patients" and someone who "maintained excellence in his profession and practice".

## FINANCIAL NEWS



## AfroCentric reports profit boost from deliveries

Administration and health management services company AfroCentric reported a rise of 19.1% to R458.6-bn in profit after tax from pharmacy deliveries during the year to end-June. The healthcare retail division, which includes courier Pharmacy Direct and medicines wholesaler Curaasana, reported profit after tax more of R178.9-m.

Afrocentric plans to find growth in SA's corporate sector as well as the employed, but medically uninsured market, says CEO Ahmed Bandeker.

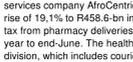
## Ascendis Health expects a rise in earnings

Ascendis Health expects its earnings to increase by up to 333% (from R279-m to up to R1.2- bn) for the year ended 30 June 2020, reported *Fin24* (23 September 2020).

As part of the strategy to reduce its debt, the group started selling its assets, with the most recent transaction the sale of its subsidiary Dezzo Trading, for R25-m.

It will also be selling Ascendis Direct Selling for R10.5-m.

## PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS



## SA joins measles vaccine trial in COVID-19 fight

Researchers are preparing to launch the SA leg of an international trial investigating whether the well established measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) shot used in childhood immunisation programmes can protect front-line healthcare workers from Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The SA arm of the study is expected to receive final approval from the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority shortly and will enrol about 5 000 volunteers in sub-Saharan Africa.

More than 170 potential C-19 vaccines are being developed worldwide, but only nine are in late-stage phase 3 efficacy trials. None has yet been approved by regulators, according to the World Health Organisation.

## GENERAL NEWS

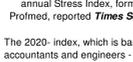
## Stressed professionals in SA are struggling



SA professionals are taking huge strain, according to the annual Stress Index, formulated by medical insurer Profmed, reported *Times Select* (21 September 2020).

The 2020 - index, which is based on surveys with professionals - mainly doctors, lawyers, accountants and engineers - found that about 37% of those surveyed are stressed out (up from just above 30% last year), but more than 70% have not sought help or support.

Profmed CEO, Craig Cornie, said more than a third of respondents were medical professionals and specialists. "Fear of the unknown" had shown up as the "biggest threat" and "huge amounts of information (especially relating to COVID-19) had been shared" which had caused major anxiety among professionals as they had "tried to wade through information" to figure out what was correct and what was not, said Cornie.

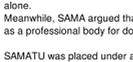


## Liquidation threats hang over SAMA

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) could be liquidated if the administrator of its union, the SA Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU), has his way, reported *Eyewitness News* (14 September 2020).

According to a court application SAMA owes the union R370-m in membership fees alone. Meanwhile, SAMA argued that the monthly membership fees it received, belonged to it as a professional body for doctors.

SAMATU was placed under administration in October 2019 following several contraventions of the Labour Relations Act. This led to a raging legal battle between SAMA, a non-profit professional association, and the trade union administrator. The union represents about 7,500 public sector doctors.

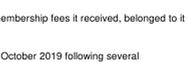


## Bill Gates warns on vaccine grab

Microsoft founder Bill Gates has warned that almost twice as many people will die from C-19 if rich countries buy up the first 2-bn doses of vaccine, instead of ensuring the shots are fairly distributed - (*Business Day* - 15 September 2020) .

The US based Northeastern University's laboratory for the Modelling of Biological and Sociotechnical Systems found that 33% of the C-19 deaths expected in the absence of a vaccine could be averted if the first 2-bn out of 3-bn doses of an 80% effective shot were distributed to 50 high-income countries.

If all 3-bn doses were distributed to all nations in proportion to their populations, 61% of the deaths could be averted.



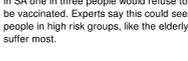
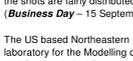
## Anti-vaxxers put SA at risk - IXPoS survey

According to an Ipxos survey among 20 000 people from 27 countries, 74% said they would agree to a COVID-19 vaccination if one were available. However, in SA one in three people would refuse to be vaccinated. Experts say this could see people in high risk groups, like the elderly, suffer most.

• The SA Pharmacy Council's Neovo Mayimela said there was "ill-informed speculation" about COVID-19 on social media, but that the virus was "super infectious".

• Constitutional law expert, Paul Hoffmann, said it was ultimately up to an individual to decide whether he or she wanted to get a vaccination.

## NEWS ON MEDICAL SCHEMES



## Medshield announces 2021 price hike

Medshield announced an increase of 5.9% in members' contribution fees for 2021. This, despite a circular in July, by the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) recommending that medical aids either freeze or keep their increases in line with inflation, at 3.9%.

Thonessa Naidoo, principal officer of Medshield, said the scheme had settled on a 5.9% average increase because that was the sustainable amount, despite expecting to end the year with a surplus of R300- m.

• Momentum has since announced an increase of 3.9% for 2021.

## Review shows medicine expenditure up in 2019

According to the latest Mediscor Medicine Review, medicine expenditure in the Mediscor medical scheme population increased by 2.4% from 2018 to 2019.

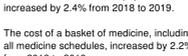
The cost of a basket of medicine, including all medicine schedules, increased by 2.2% from 2018 to 2019.

Unscheduled and scheduled medicines, constituted 5.6% of the basket, and experienced a 3.6% increase from 2018.

Schedule 1 to 8 medicines increased by 2.1%, and new chemical entities (NCEs) 1.1%.

## Circulars from the CMS

The following Circulars were published by the CMS in September 2020.



**60 of 2020**  
 Reportable Irregularities - CMS contact details

**62 of 2020**  
 Invitation to comment on the guidelines for the identification of beneficiaries with SRM risk factors in accordance with SRM entry and verification criteria

**61 of 2020**  
 Request for HIV, TB and STI data for South African National Aids Council (SANAC)

## SPECIAL NOTES

## Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Consultant Post available

An ENT Consultant Post is available at CJGM Regional (Stanger) Hospital on the KwaZulu-Natal coast, 60km north of Durban and 20 minutes' drive from the King Shaka International Airport.

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ENT Consultant

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