



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



Newsmaker of the Year: Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize

"As SA's first responder to the event that defined 2020, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has had a brutal year, involving very little sleep. But it's not the fact that he caught the virus that he dubs the low moment of the year, but the debilitating incidents of corruption involving personal protective equipment. In an exclusive interview, he tells the *Financial Mail* about his extraordinary year — and why he reckons National Health Insurance (NHI) is now non-negotiable, reported *Financial Mail* (17 Dec 2020)

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NEWS ON GOVERNMENT



Government outlines NHI implementation schedule

On December 8, *Business Tech* reported that President Cyril Ramaphosa had entered into a performance agreement with Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize which includes a hard implementation date for SA's National Health Insurance (NHI).

The performance agreement, which was made publicly available on December 8, for the first time, states that the NHI should be progressively implemented to ensure health coverage for at least 90% of SA by 2030.

As part of this process, the following deadlines must be met by Mkhize:

- The NHI Fund must be established as a public entity and be operational by 2021/2022;
- The Fund should begin purchasing services by 2022/2023; and
- Through a progressive process, 90% of South Africans should be covered by 2030.

The performance agreements also require Mkhize to prepare all of the country's necessary clinics and hospitals for the system by 2025.

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Inspection reveals inadequate PPE at public hospitals

A blitz inspection by the office of the public prosecutor at 17 public hospitals revealed that there was inadequate provision for healthcare workers and other staff members due to a lack of PPE, reported *News24* (22 December 2020). The procured PPE were found to be not as per the specifications and substandard. PPE stock levels at the warehouse where PPE are collected are very low.

SA misses deadline for C-19 vaccine

South Africa, the African country hardest hit by the coronavirus, missed the December 15 deadline for a deposit on the R2.2-bn it needs to pay to secure a COVID-19 vaccine through the Covax coalition.



The government has also failed to secure a guarantee to make a full payment, reported *News24* (17 Dec 2020).

According to the Solidarity Fund, a philanthropic organisation who undertook to pay the R327-m deposit, a payment will be made as soon as it gets the go ahead from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations which is running Covax.

On December 4, the Department of Health said it was back on track to sign the Covax agreement and make the first payment on December 15.

By December 21, the total number of confirmed COVID19 cases was 930 711; the total number of deaths 24 907; and the total number of recoveries 796 346.

FINANCIAL NEWS

Dis-Chem plan might offer affordable healthcare



Dis-Chem CFO Rui Morais revealed that the pharmacy chain has made an offer for an insurance business in order to establish a low-cost out-of-hospital medical care plan aimed at consumers without medical aids. The potential new business will also offer life insurance that could integrate with Dis-Chem's potential new business: Baby City.

Dis-Chem already sells low-cost generic medicines and has nurse-run clinics as well as nurse-led telemedicine in its pharmacies. Although low-cost health insurance products were to be banned by March 2021, the Council for Medical Schemes has granted an extension to some health insurance products until 2022, after consultations and resistance from the insurance and medical industry.

In the six months to August, Dis-Chem reported revenue growth of 8.1% to R12.8-bn and a 16.1% increase in headline earnings per share, to 36c per share.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS



SAHPRA to fast-track approval of COVID-19 vaccines

SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) announced that the regulatory approval for COVID-19 vaccines will be fast tracked. The first applications are expected within a fortnight and the first vaccines from the Covax global vaccine distribution scheme should start in the second quarter of next year.

Yuvan Gounden, the authority's spokesperson, said SAHPRA will take a "rolling review approach" where vaccine candidate evaluation is done as data becomes available.

The regulator will rely on guidance from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and work done by international counterparts, such as European and US pharmaceutical regulators, to avoid repeating work already done that could delay approvals.

Clicks is negotiating to distribute C-19 vaccines

Business Insider reported on December 9, that pharmaceutical retailer Clicks has offered government its cold-chain compliant distribution system to help distribute vaccines for the coronavirus once they are available. All of the current frontrunner COVID vaccines need to be refrigerated. Clicks currently distributes vaccines to all clients in the corporate and private pharmacy environments, clinics and private hospitals in compliance with cold chain requirements. Clicks pharmacies are also set up to store such vaccines as all are equipped with temperature monitored fridges. Shoprite and Pick n Pay have already said they are standing ready to assist in distributing the vaccine.

GENERAL NEWS



Support for SA call to open up patents

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has called on governments around the world to support SA and India's proposal to waive aspects of global intellectual property laws to ensure affordable and accessible Covid-19 vaccines, once safe and effective products have been developed. The two countries have asked the World Trade Organisation to let nations choose not to grant or enforce patents and other intellectual property rights related to Covid-19 tests, treatments and vaccines for the duration of the pandemic.

Elsabe Klinck and Associates highlighted the following in its December newsletter:

'I rest my case'



NHI Hearings:

The secretary of the Health Portfolio Committee has indicated that hearings on the NHI Bill will take place in January 2021. (It is unlikely that the Portfolio Committee members would not have had time to read submissions.)

COVID-19:

Pressure on employers and business-owners to ensure compliance with the Disaster Management Regulations (DMRegs) and the Consolidated Health & Safety Directions. Terminology in the Plan and all documents must align with the South African legal frameworks and explicitly refer to the DMRegs, the OHS Act and the Notifiable Medical Conditions Regulations. Labour inspectors are inspecting workplaces to ensure compliance with the various legislative frameworks and to look at paperwork such as sign-in sheets, Annexure E plans, wherever the name of the Covid Compliance Officer is displayed, etc.)

High Court Rulings in favour of insurance claims related to C-19

Good news for businesses and practices that were affected by the shutdowns in earlier levels under the DMRegs, is that four High Court rulings (Ma'Afrika Hotels, Cafe Chameleon, Grassy Knoll and Interfax) have confirmed that insurance policies would have to pay out claims for COVID lockdown-related business interruption. These cases all addressed the wording in such policies on the locality of the disease (Covid cases within certain proximity of the business or practice), and the direct impact on the business as related to Covid cases (i.e. infections in that business), even though the business closed as a result of the Lockdown, and not as a result of a Covid case in the business or practice.

POPI Act

On July 1, 2021 the POPI Act will be implemented. The Information Regulator has appointed more staff and office-bearers, and would have powers to inspect businesses to make sure that they comply with the new regulations.

Key actions that must be taken include:

1. the appointment of deputy-information officers,
2. updating the PAIA Manual,
3. training the information officer and deputies,
4. undertaking a POPI audit, including on security,
5. develop a POPI Framework (with policies and SOPs), etc.

NEWS ON MEDICAL SCHEMES



CMS forbids Discovery and NetcarePlus to sell vouchers



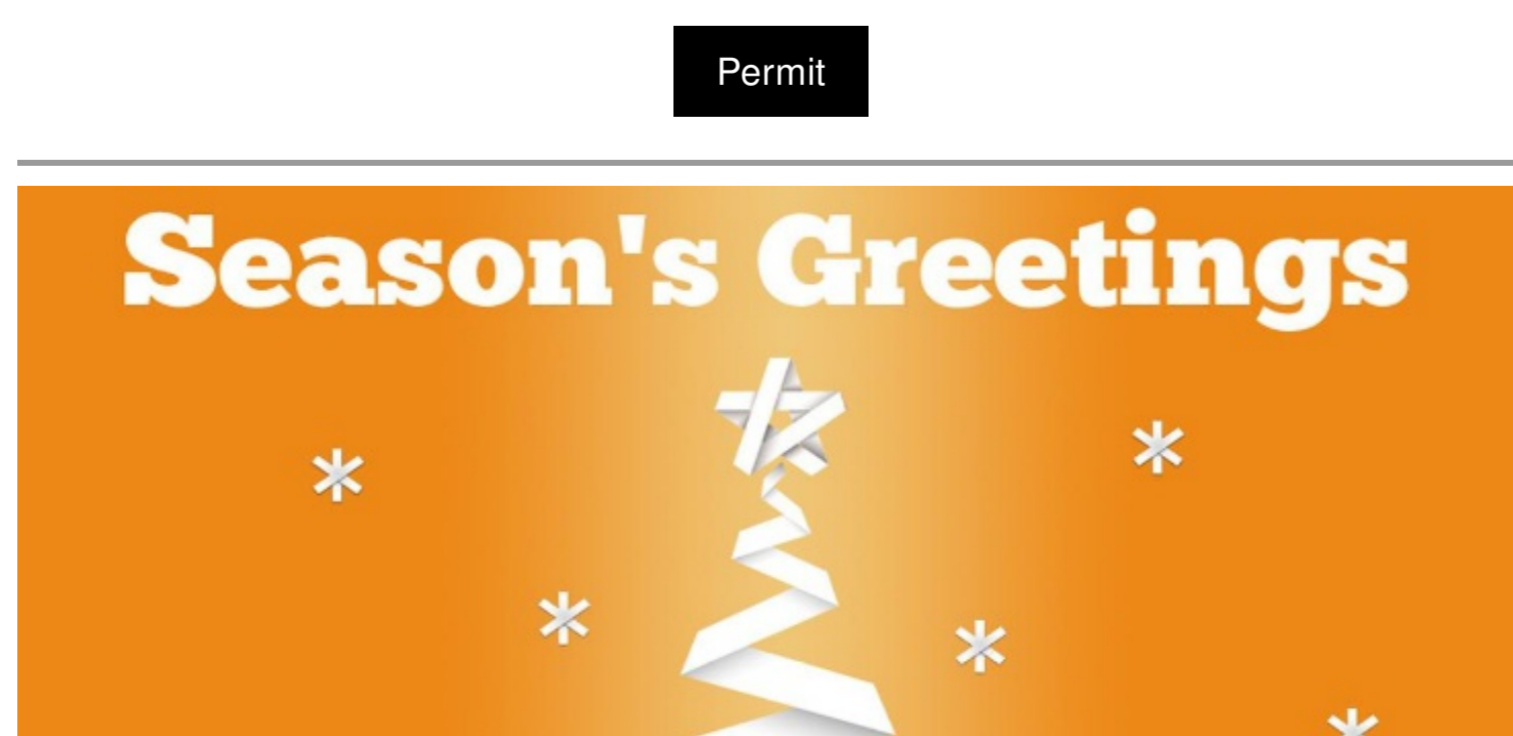
The Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) has instructed Discovery Health and NetcarePlus not to sell prepaid health vouchers, reported *The Citizen* (14 December 2020). "This announcement of enforcement action by the CMS against Discovery Health and NetcarePlus, in terms of section 20 (1) of the Medical Schemes Act, for "conducting the business of a medical scheme" comes after *The Citizen* asked the CMS if this product is not the same as the Discovery Comprehensive PrimaryCare and Discovery Essential PrimaryCare products that landed Discovery in hot water before."

- In the beginning of December Discovery Health launched a new platform offering a R300 voucher for a general practitioner (GP), including the medicines dispensed by the doctor.
- In August, the Netcare group launched *Netcare Plus GP Vouchers*, offering competitively priced prepaid vouchers that are redeemable for GP consultations.

SPECIAL NOTES

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