



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 broadcast, independent newspaper, magazine or website. It is not intended to be such a slow news.

In this Newsletter

- Food for Thought
- News on Government
- Special News
- Financial News
- Pharmaceutical News
- General News
- News on Medical Schemes
- Special Notes

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Ready to vaccinate but: 'waiting in the dark'

"Had Discovery CEO Adrian Gore, or the private sector, been in charge of vaccines from the get-go, chances are it wouldn't be such a slow grind," wrote Rob Rose in a *Financial Mail* Editorial (1 April 2021).

Ryan Noach, CEO of Discovery Health, said that while his company will be ready to vaccinate by May 11, he's "really going to wait" when they will start.

"There is no country in Europe, except Belarus and North Macedonia, that is as far behind as SA. The upshot (sic) is that while you'd want all SA's high-risk groups - those older than 60 or with co-morbidities - to have been vaccinated by mid-winter in June, it won't happen."

To read more, click on the button below

Read More

Also read the letter: *Vaccine saga pointer to NHF in Business Day* (28 March 2021) by following the link below

Read More

Business needs meaningful benefits to battle mental health emergency

- *Chartered Accountants Worldwide*

According to a study by the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**, instances of work-related stress, depression or anxiety have increased exponentially over the past year. The study warns that the knock-on effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the stress caused by workload pressures – tight deadlines, too much responsibility and a lack of managerial support – are inflicting mental health pressures on staff like never before.

"A huge proportion of sick days are lost each year due to stress-related issues. In 2019-20, stress, depression and anxiety accounted for 51% of all work-related ill health cases and 55% of all working days lost due to work-related ill health," according to HSE.

To read more, click on the button below

Read More

NEWS ON GOVERNMENT

Enough vaccines (on paper) to vaccinate 41-m South Africans

On Tuesday, (6 April) Health Minister Zweeki Mkhize said that the Pfizer agreement for 20-m doses of vaccines (enough for 10-m people) had been signed and that payment processes were under way to close the deal. This implies that the country now has enough vaccines (on paper) to vaccinate 41-m people - about 69% of the population.

"It is true that administering vaccines is simpler than running COVID-19 wards, but if you think about which entities to entrust with complicated logistical programmes, the Eastern Cape Department of Health, for example, will not be high on many people's lists. It seems obvious that South Africa's significant private sector health infrastructure and logistical capacity should be roped in to help, but to what extent this will happen remains to be seen," wrote Marcus Low in *Spotlight* (9 April 2021)

State finally signs contract with Pfizer for 20-m vaccines

On April 6, *Business Day* reported that the Department of Health has finally signed a contract with US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer for the supply of 20-m vaccines with delivery beginning mid-April. Pfizer is a double-dose vaccine, while J&J consists of a single dose. The contracts are not for public dissemination as governments are required to sign non-disclosure agreements. This follows a demand by Pfizer that SA's Health and Finance Ministers personally sign a COVID-19 vaccine supply agreement in order to indemnify the supplier from any claims against it.

High Court allows doctors to prescribe Ivermectin to COVID-19 patients

A recent decision by Judge Cassim Sardivalan in the Pretoria High Court reads that: "Registered medical practitioners who are entitled to prescribe medicines in schedule 3 of the act, may, in their professional discretion, prescribe Ivermectin to be compounded into a medicine that contains Ivermectin as an active ingredient for the treatment of their patients, on condition that the medicine is compounded by the holder of a licence."

Judge Cassim Sardivalan also ordered SAHPRA to:

- report to the court every three months to indicate if any adjustments have been made to the programme providing access to Ivermectin for the treatment of Covid-19; and
- SAHPRA and Minister of Health, who is listed as a respondent in the matter, were also ordered to pay costs on R20-m towards the costs of the four applicant groups. This includes contributing R350,000 to the legal fees of the pharmacies, R500,000 in the case brought by Dr George Coetzee and Afriforum, R500,000 to the legal bills of the ACDP and Doctors for Life and R450,000 to 1 Can Make a Difference.

LATEST CORONAVIRUS STATISTICS

Local figures on 9 April 2021

According to statistics from the Department of Health and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases a total of 1 554 975 cases of COVID-19 have been reported with 853 new cases in the last 24 hours.

A total of 1 480 652 people have recovered, 53 173 deaths have been reported; and 10 055 899 coronavirus tests have been conducted.

SPECIAL NEWS

Serious need for HPCSA, CMS to resolve confidentiality issues

If a medical scheme wishes to obtain a member's healthcare service information, or records, from the relevant provider, whose responsibility is it to obtain consent from the member/patient to release this information?

Prompted by a delegate question during the first session of the Council for Medical Schemes' (CMS) Fraud Waste and Abuse virtual summit, Dr Maryazowa Kwinda, acting registrar and ombudsman CEO, Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) acknowledged that in the past, the onus was on the provider to get consent from the patient to hand over the care information to the patient's medical scheme. But, he indicated, this should not be the case:

"If the medical scheme wants the member information kept by the health care provider, then it is the responsibility of the scheme to obtain consent from the member, their member, and only then request information from the practitioner."

To read more, click on the button below

Read More

suncare
at Lady Hamilton
make yourself at home

Suncare at Lady Hamilton is a boutique residential mental health facility situated in Cape Town. We offer guests with moderate mental health disorders a truly safe and comfortable 'home from home' long term lifestyle, free from social pressures and modern-day stress. Guests are able to live in a normal, destigmatized, quiet and graceful environment whilst receiving monitoring by onsite enrolled nurses who provide assistance with medication compliance and support.

For more information
info@suncare.co.za | www.suncare.co.za | +27 21 423 3888

Click here to read more about the facility

FINANCIAL NEWS

Ascendis Health reports a massive loss

On March 31, Ascendis Health reported a massive R673.80-m loss from a R204.96-m profit last year, reported *Business Report* (1 April 2021). The loss during the six months to end December was caused by rising debt, higher finance costs, increased tax expenses and impairments. Ascendis incurred a R246-m impairment during the period with a tax expense increasing to R139-m and net debt rising to R6.6-bn.

This pushed normalised headline earnings down 131% to a loss of R43-m, with normalised headline loss per share from continuing operations of 3c a share. Chief executive Mark Sardi said the benefit of COVID-19 related sales were partly offset by restrictions on elective surgeries in hospitals and fewer trauma cases during the lockdown period.

Advanced Health seems to be on the mend

Advanced Health, which has had a torrid time on the JSE since listing in 2014, might finally be on the mend - partly thanks to COVID-19 protocols, wrote Marc Hasseluis in *Financial Mail* (1 April 2021).

According to the latest trading update the firm's turnover for January and February for both the SA and the Australian operations is 19% higher compared with the same months in 2020.

Advanced Health CEO Gerhard van Emmenis said that in the wake of the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 - with the lack of sufficient vaccines and winter looming - it is apparent that day hospitals have become safe havens for specialists to operate in. For 2021, Advanced Health has secured favourable designated service provider contracts with a number of medical schemes - including the low-cost options of Bonitas, Medihelp and BestMed.

Growthpoint sells 'green hospital' for R515.55-m

Growthpoint Properties SA is selling Cintocare Private Surgical Hospital to its healthcare fund, Growthpoint Healthcare for R515.55-m, bringing Growthpoint Healthcare's asset base to R3.2-bn. The fund will continue to pay an asset management fee and dividend to its parent company.

The 11 000m² specialised surgical hospital in the Menlyn Maine, Pretoria is the first five-star-rated green hospital in Africa, and the fifth in the world. Construction of the R470-m hospital began in July 2018 and was completed on time at the end of 2020. The hospital, with 100 beds, specialises in head and neck, spinal and vascular surgery. Growthpoint Properties is SA's largest landlord with exposure to R157-bn of assets in five countries.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

SAHPRA allows conditional approval for J&J vaccine

The SA Health Products Regulatory (SAHPRA) has granted "conditional approval" for Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) single doses vaccine. Up until now the vaccine was used in a clinical trial for health workers, but it can now be administered to the general population. J&J has signed agreements to provide 31-m doses of the vaccine to SA. It will provide 2.8-m doses between April and June, with the "first delivery scheduled for the second half of April".

According to SAHPRA CEO, Bolitumelo Semete-Makokotela, the conditions include that the vaccine is supplied and administered in accordance with the National Department of Health Covid-19 vaccination plan and applicable guidelines.

More vaccine confusion: MAC contradicts Health Minister over Novavax

"There has been yet another vaccine fumble, this time over the Novavax vaccine," reported (7 April 2021), *MedicalBrief*.

Last week, Health Minister Zweeki Mkhize told the portfolio committee in parliament the Minister's Advisory Committee (MAC) had advised that the Novavax vaccine is "not suitable for our setting". However, according to the head of MAC, Professor Barry Schoub, data on the Novavax vaccine had only recently been released and that the committee would "critically evaluate" how effective it is.

Novavax is a two-dose vaccine, available through the global procurement initiative co-ordinated by Covax, of which SA is a member. According to a study done in SA, the Novavax vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine that has been shown to reduce the risk of even mild-moderate COVID-19 due to the B1351 variant by 50%.

GENERAL NEWS

HPCSA found 4 medical advisors guilty of unprofessional conduct

At its latest meeting (16 - 17 March 2021), the Second Medical Committee of South African Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) Inquiry found four medical advisors guilty of unprofessional conduct in terms of Reg 4(9) of regulations relating to conduct of inquiries into alleged unprofessional conduct under the Health Professions Act.

The advisors were fined R20 000.00 each for not drafting evidence-based scheme protocols. Apparently, the evidence they used to support their decisions was 20 years old; even after current evidence was presented to them by the relevant clinical specialist academic societies.

Under Regulation 15 of the Medical Schemes Act, that deals with managed care, all Regulations employed by a scheme (whether pre-authorisations, Protocols or Formularies) must be evidence based.

World Health Organization Governments and WHO want global treaty for future pandemics

Governments and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are uniting on a push for a new treaty to improve defenses against future pandemics after COVID-19 exposed weaknesses in the system, reported *Bloomberg* (30 March 2021). This would ensure a collective approach across countries and societies that would make the world more resilient in future outbreaks.

In a letter co-signed by world leaders, the EU and the WHO, the group says the coronavirus "exploited our weaknesses and divisions" adding that "we must seize this opportunity and come together as a global community for peaceful co-operation that extends beyond this crisis". Signatories to the letter include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Lesotho Government cancels 18 year deal with Netcare

The Lesotho government has cancelled its 18-year contract with Netcare Hospital Group for a multimillion-rand project to build and manage Lesotho's biggest hospital. What was supposed to be a model public-private partnership (PPP) has now been cancelled due to allegations against Netcare. - *BusinessLive* (5 April 2021)

Netcare and its local partners, Tsepong, borrowed 800-m maloti from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to build the R1 2-bn Queen Mamoah Memorial Hospital. The government guaranteed the loan and paid R400-m towards the construction to reduce the cost of the debt and fees.

"The government has accused Netcare and local partners of violating the contract to provide clinical services and bleeding" the country through huge utility fees. It says the company worsened the crisis at the hospital by firing 300 nurses who were on a pay strike for six weeks. Netcare, however, said it diligently kept its end of the bargain and will fight the decision."

NEWS FROM MEDICAL AIDS

HealthMan has added all the medical scheme benefits guides to the HealthMan website. To view them, click on the button below

Medical Scheme Benefits guides

SPECIAL NOTES

Health Systems Strengthening Research Workshop 13 May 2021

HSS is a collaboration between the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USBS), the School of Public Leadership (SPL), the Department of Economics (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences), the Industrial Engineering Department (Faculty of Engineering) and the Department of Global Health (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences).

This workshop aims to:

- Strengthen and expand cross-faculty research networks of researchers and postgraduate students who strive for optimal healthcare quality and equity in our society;
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary thinking and problem solving in private health sciences through sharing research plans and progress; and
- Think innovatively about solutions that will work for public and private healthcare users.

To register for the workshop, click on the button below

Register for HSS workshop

SAVE THE DATE

2nd Southern African Multidisciplinary Virtual ADHD Congress
Wednesday 13 September - Wednesday 14 September 2021

organised by: USBS, SPL, HSS

Workshop aims to:

- Strengthen and expand cross-faculty research networks of researchers and postgraduate students who strive for optimal healthcare quality and equity in our society;
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary thinking and problem solving in private health sciences through sharing research plans and progress; and
- Think innovatively about solutions that will work for public and private healthcare users.

To register for the workshop, click on the button below

Register for HSS workshop

Advertisement

Block Advertisement

Application Form

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

Private Practice Review provides rates 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 and should not be construed as advice or recommendations. Individuals should take into account their own unique and specific circumstances and seek professional advice. Content is available for use outside our organization that is reported in the national press. Consequently, any information, trademarks, service marks, product names or media 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.