Private Practice Review, February 2021

HealthMan

PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Ramaphosa failed to deliver on promises

No South African pressured another batch of promises in the State of the Nation. Ramaphosa's failure to deliver on last year's promises, has left President Pat Talking on deficit on last year's promises.
Read more, click on the Author Below

It is unclear what vaccines have been produced in the past 12 months and who has access to them.

Ramaphosa spoke proudly on global platforms about "African self-reliance and vaccine nationalism", said Dr Monica Parker, a SAHPRA panel member, but SA currently has no vaccine production capacity, and has to rely on donations from other countries. Despite exploiting a rolling mass test at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as part of the SA-led campaign to waive intellectual property rights for coronavirus medicines and vaccines for 18 and more, the war on for enhanced locally a selection in other technologies, according to Parker.

Dr Monica Parker, Gauteng Health Department MEC has not been tested in Parliament, even while a global pandemic has shown how crippling patent monopolies can be for the ordinary person.

Criminalisation of doctors - an update

Three charges of murder against paediatric surgeon

2019 reported on 7 February that paediatric surgeon, Prof Peter Brooke, is now being charged with three counts of murder, after three children underwent surgery in the death of a 10 year old boy, following surgery in mid and million. In January 2021 Brooke was charged with three counts of murder, after three children underwent surgery to his indictment after the death of a 23 month-old girl following the same surgery. The charges relate to the death of a 10 year old boy in mid-May, being charged with murder of a child, a three year old boy.

'The law must be changed'

Burgman reports in its latest newsletter that approximately 20 healthcare practitioners have been charged with culpable homicide in recent years and some have been jailed.

"Negligence is fairly easy for healthcare practitioners to be arrested for such charges and jailed, while the perpetrators of crimes against the elderly and vulnerable in Homes/Nursing/Assisting Living facilities, significantly treated.

"Burgman and SAPM have consulted widely and now are submitting a request for a complete review of the law, to the Minister of Justice, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and the South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMA)"
(Tjandamfumfu/Bizfeeds)

"The submission is expected before 28 February 2021. In addition, papers are being prepared for a formal application to the Minister of Justice, to request the formation of a detailed presentation on the criminalisation of surgeons will be featured during the June 2021 Conference."

SAMA strongly condemns murder charges

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) released a statement condemning the murder charges, and SAMA believes that medical doctors pledge to do no harm, and that medical practitioners should not be criminally prosecuted for unavoidable injury caused to patients.

Dr Mohamed Cassim, President of the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA) regards the trial as engaged in unavoidable injury despite a previous ruling.

NEWS FROM GOVERNMENT

Unfilled doctor posts hamper public healthcare

Doctors have been unable to fill vacancies in public healthcare facilities, said the South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMA) in a press statement, concern about the compromise of healthcare quality, as hundreds of medical practitioners have been unable to fill vacancies in public healthcare facilities, with thousands of hundreds of unemployed healthcare practitioners demanding to be absorbed into clinics and hospitals.

Thousands waiting for operations

Delays in the procurement of specialised machinery and filling of critical posts are among the reasons for 18 637 patients being on the waiting list for operations in Gauteng public hospitals, reports Health Reporter.
Read more, click on the Author Below

"Chris Hani Baragwanath has the largest waiting list of 10 993 patients in total, including 1 717 patients who will need surgery and five months for the procedure to be performed. The largest backlogs are in cataract surgery, with more than 10 000 patients who will wait for up to 12 months for the procedure. Other hospitals with long waiting lists are Dr George Mukhari, Pretoria, Pholosong and Bekezela hospitals. The worst waiting times are at Dr George Mukhari, at 12 months.

Reasons for the delays include: delays in the procurement of specialised machinery, delayed recruitment of specialist doctors, or delays in filling of critical posts, and the lack of theatre time, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring treatment, and delays in the filling of critical posts. Load-shedding has also adversely affected operations, and has forced Pretoria Gauteng Health to be provided.

Hospitals run 'surgery marathons'

The Gauteng Department of Health has instituted critical procedural measures, including "surgery marathons" to reduce the backlog of patients waiting for surgery, reports Health Reporter (22 February 2021). Among the hospitals making use of "surgery marathons" are Chris Hani Baragwanath, Dr George Mukhari, Pretoria, Pholosong and Bekezela hospitals. Mrs Hoakoni, Cst, Sibia and Jobies hospitals are being used in the 'cluster system'. "The promise has been made to reduce the backlog of patients waiting for various procedures.

Ongoing problems at Charlotte Maxeke after fire damage

There are doubts about beds/cots, the quality of anesthesiology, cardiothoracic, and neurosurgery services, and the ability to provide services, after a fire at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital, reported **Spotlight** (21 February 2021).

"Added to this are deepening concerns that theft and suspected sabotage continue and that the hospital is unable to provide services, as it is in a state of "total chaos". Staff have PTA issued yields that need to be filled to meet the high demand for healthcare services.

Read more, click on the Author Below

New regulations to warn consumers

Food with certain levels of salt, sugar or saturated fat may soon have to be labelled with health warnings and will be prohibited from being sold to children, reports **News24** (22 February 2021).

The food industry and health experts have three months to comment on the DSI, page Regulations Relating to the Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs regulations the Department of Health (DoH) has published in the Government Gazette, for public comment, process. **Business Day** (22 February 2021).

Fourth that would require prominent warnings include: liquids that have sugar added to it sweetening 5g per 100ml or solid foods with sugar equalling or sweetening 15g per 100g; foods with more than 10% of the daily value of sodium; and foods with more than 10% of the daily value, sugar, calories and an artificial sweetener.

This means cheese, a lot of processed food, sugary drinks, diet drinks, fatty foods, biscuits, crackers, and many component meals would need large warnings.

Union threats going to court over load shedding

The Health and Allied Workers Trade Union (HAWU) is threatening to take the Department of Health to court, if it does not provide its members with alternative power, reports **News24** (22 February 2021).

"The union claims that patients are dying at state hospitals because of load-shedding and doctors are forced "to make terrible choices over who lives and dies". Only 17 hospitals have generators, and only 3 of the 10 hospitals in Gauteng have back-up generators. "It is disgrace the government has allowed Eskom to collapse the country, and now it is not providing alternatives and alternative conditions," said Jabulani Sithole.

FINANCIAL NEWS

They made billions from Covid-19

Modern reported on 8 February that Moderna Biopharmaceuticals including Pfizer, BioNTech, Moderna, Gilead Sciences, AstraZeneca, and Merck, earned about 20 billion dollars in sales of Covid-19 vaccines and treatments, in 2020, reported.

However, Moderna, which made exclusively a jugular-focus vaccine could be a mega sale, which in 2020 due to built up product inventories worldwide. Population immunity from vaccination and other non-pharmaceutical interventions also means that treatment sales could dip.

In 2022 Pfizer earned $15bn, but capacity revenue to drop to around $21.5 bn in 2023, Moderna earned about $ 8.8 bn in 2020, but capacity to drop to $ 5.5 bn in 2021 and $ 2.5 bn in 2022, Gilead earned $ 2.2 bn in 2020, but capacity to drop to $ 1.5 bn in 2021. Other companies have seen a more modest effect from their Covid vaccinations.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

WHO lashes out at baby formula companies

The World Health Organization (WHO) blames infant formula makers of using misleading marketing and aggressive lobbying tactics to sell their products to an article in The parent medical journal.

According to the article published on the WHO website, the "aggressive marketing practices" of the formula companies undermine efforts to promote breastfeeding as the safest breast milk.

"The authors said new products, such as hypoallergenic or organic formulas, are also being promoted as healthier than standard formulas, despite being more expensive and pricier products. Concern about the global industry's outreach, particularly in developing countries, where it is difficult to enforce laws and regulations governing the marketing of infant formula, "amazing Baby has health benefits related to childhood," reported **Bloomberg** (8 February 2021).

Nestle SA, Danone, Reckitt Benckiser Group, Danone SA, China Feihe Ltd and Dutch dairy cooperative Royal FrieslandCampina NV are the major formula producers. Nestle, three of the companies see directly accused of unethical marketing or lobbying by the international coalition of researchers.

SA's vaccine production capacity boosted

SA's vaccine manufacturing capacity has received a significant boost with a R20 m grant from the European Union (EU) and the European Investment Bank (EIB).
Read more, click on the Author Below

reported **South Africa** (8 Feb 2021).

"The funds will support the expansion of Biovac, a human vaccine manufacturer, and will enable the company to produce up to 100 m doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. Biovac (PBC) announced it had selected a BE-consultant to run an AIBM-technology manufacturing hub, serving all low and middle-income countries. Within this consortium, William Blair Investment Management, a global investment firm, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Research Council (GMRC) provides the research, and The Biovac entities a line four manufacturing facility.

No 'updated' Covid-19 vaccine for SA anytime soon

Spotlight reported on 10 February that the Vaccine Ministerial Advisory Committee has "no plans to roll out a Covid-19 vaccine that has been updated to deal with the new variants, Minister Zwelini – who is the "to-do" list was a lot, as only because they are "not aware of any evidence that the current vaccines will be less effective against the new standard variants", according to the Department of Health.

Indeed, people in SA and other countries have been vaccinated with Pfizer-BioNtech and Johnson & Johnson J&J vaccine doses.

Medical Brief (10 February 2021).

However, Stellenbosch University says it has since outlined measures to reduce trainee doctor mistreatment, reports **Rapsody**.

"Nearly 80% of medical students also took part in the study, which found that "a significant number of students reported being subjected to mistreatment in a very similar way to worldwide, according to the researchers, who also uncovered high rates of racial and gender discrimination against students in the medicine and health faculty.

This paper, published in the journal **Teaching and Learning in Medicine**, *recorded the requirement of mistreatment in the Stellenbosch study.*

To read more, click on the Author Below

Read More

NEWS FROM MEDICAL SCHEMES

Flexicare - affordable health insurance

Discovery has launched an affordable health insurance product Flexicare, which provides primary care cover in three ways to the more medical aid, reported Bizcommunity (22 February 2021).

"Discovery will leverage Clicks's network of around 600 stores in the country for administration. This offering is not new. It has been available to the open market for companies employees for the last five years and is a way for them to provide a level of medical cover for employees who are not able to afford a full medical aid. The product across 600 pharmacies groups across the clinic. Front-line staff, in the form of Sister Clinics, will be able to provide primary care services, and refer patients to Clicks Clinics." Dr Vuyani Dlamini, Discovery Health, Clinic and Auto & General Insurance.

To read more, click on the Author Below

Sanlam has its eye on health insurance

Sanlam has received preliminary approval from Africa's prime shareholders to buy a controlling stake in the company.

If the provisional transaction proceeds, Sanlam will hold a majority of 55%-60% of Sanlam Sanlam Health, which is Africa's largest independent, black-owned, black-empowered shareholders who would be other, reported **Business Day** (11 February 2021).

Sanlam intends to expand its product offering to include medical aid, health insurance and administration. "Moreover, which were 50% owned by Sanlam Health, which is Africa's largest independent, black-owned, black-empowered shareholders who would be other, but for more urgency is needed to change laws to allow for lower cost alternatives.

The medical scheme industry has been the last sector operated to introduce lower options for employed individuals who are not insured but has been prevented by regulations that stipulate a base level of cover that costs at least R1 500 a month.

RAF decision to stop paying unlawful

The Road Accident Fund (RAF) decision to stop paying medical schemes was unlawful. This is the implication of Judge Brenda Bhungane's ruling in the Pretoria High Court on Friday, 12 February, in a case brought by medical aid industry role stakeholders, as a result of medical schemes and medical practitioners.
Read more, click on the Author Below
(Bizcommunity, 12 January 2020).

The decision, medical schemes have covered the cost of their members' hospital and medical bills. through the benefits they are due in terms of their policy, and then claimed back from the RAF. In 2019, the RAF stopped paying the bills, and the medical schemes decided to stop paying for medical expenses for road accident victims who are covered by medical schemes. The RAF's move was successfully challenged by SAA-logged medical schemes and medical practitioners. The RAF's decision to stop paying medical bills was found to be a form a forced scheme to stop paying medical schemes declared unlawful and unconstitutional.

CIRCULARS FROM THE CMS

New circulars published by the CMS in February 2021:

October 5 of 2021: CMS Development Programme Grant Funding

October 4 of 2021: Quarterly Statutory Returns Submission for 2022

October 3 of 2021: Request for HIV, TB and STI Data for the Medical Scheme Risk Control (MSRC)

October 2 of 2021: Quarterly Statutory Returns Submission for December 2021 and Real Time Monitoring (RTM) for 2021

SPECIAL NOTES

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