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PRIVATE PRACTICE REVIEW

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In this Newsletter

Food for Thought
Advertorial: PPS
News from Government
Pharmaceutical News
News from Medical Schemes
CMS Circulars
Special Notes

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

'How do you stop a hospital heist?'

"Correctly prescribed doses exile this life-top hospital pick. At the same time, the hospital's medical staff administer medicine to the patient. Enter the South Africans Consistence and other regulations, which have been implemented to ensure that the patient does not die from a medical error.

Write Alex van den Heever, adjunct professor at the University of the Witwatersrand's school of governance in *Daily Maverick* (11 August 2022).

"The way South Africa's health sector is governed leaves hospitals exposed to corruption, fraud and mismanagement. The National Health Act, the National Health Bill, the accountability bodies and regulators such as the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) are not enough.

"But without any real commitment from the government, the burden falls on community members to ask more of their local government.

"In the end, policy change is not only up to individual politicians, public discussion and intellectual inputs (such as Citizens can and must demand that a commitment to a National Health Insurance be made a centerpiece for any politician to gain or keep power. The alternative is failure."

Click here to read Alex van den Heever's article

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Click on the button below to also read Mark Heyneke's article:
"Health care in SA: Ideas for a better prognosis
in *Daily Maverick* (18 August 2022)

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BHF takes legal action over CMS's delays on low-income schemes

The Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) has launched a legal attack on the medical scheme industry regulator over its delays in implementing the means-based benefit packages aimed at low-income workers, reports Ed Cohen in *Daily Maverick* (11 August 2022).

"In years filed in the Pretoria High Court, the BHF sues the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) in preventing millions of people from accessing affordable cover and accused it of failing to implement the means-based benefit (MBB) that would make medical cover more affordable for low-income earners. At issue is that more than seven years after Parliament passed a legal framework to enable medical schemes to offer low-cost benefit options (LCBOs) to low-income earners, the MBB has not been implemented. Opposed by the Medical Schemes Act, the CMS is still considering how to do it."

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Also read the articles under: NEWS FROM MEDICAL SCHEMES

These taxes should pay for NHI

According to President Cyril Ramaphosa, the National Treasury (NT) and SARS are considering a tax on sugary beverages and tobacco products to pay for the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme, reports Ed Cohen in *Daily Maverick* (11 August 2022).

"Greater tolerance that for the government to increase its income, which will also benefit the implementation of NHI, it should consider raising taxes on products and services that are strong factors behind the burden of non-communicable diseases in South Africa.

"According to National Health Africa's directory and Causes of Death in South Africa 2018 report, the top five causes of death in South Africa are ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, other forms of heart disease, HIV and hypertensive diseases, among others.

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Patient organisations must speak up on final NHI review

"The *NH Whole Paper* objectives that the success of this health reform requires a patient-centred implementation roadmap are spot-on."

Write Ingrid Nel in *Daily Maverick* (24 August 2022).

"For this reason, patient involvement is critically essential in all phases of the process to transform the system. Patients need to step up to the plate to elucidate participatory governance and accountability in the NHI. This is a tall order, given the system dominated by politicians, academics and other policy stakeholders who make the process inaccessible to patients.

"Of the 21 members who were invited as *NH stakeholder representatives to the Presidential Health Summit in 2018, only two represented patients' perspectives, interests and needs."

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ADVERTORIAL

Why liquidity is essential when we die

*By **Jocelyn K Kavula** of PPS Fiduciary Services*

During our lifetime, we accumulate wealth in the form of various assets, e.g. property, motor vehicles, businesses and investments.

A surviving wealth, it is vital to ensure that sufficient liquidity is available so that assets are efficiently transferred to our heirs.

And, once transferred, beneficiaries must be able to afford the preservation costs of the inherited assets.

Apart from possibly always or finalising an estate, other issues to consider and which require liquidity are: Should a beneficiary want to keep the family home, should they decide whether you are running a business, if you are married in community of property, whether you have children from a previous marriage, and so on.

Having a financial adviser and using specialists in estate planning will ensure that all the consequences of your death have been addressed, adequate liquidity has been provided to prevent cash shortfalls and a proper plan in place so that your hungry remains intact for your dependants.

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NEWS FROM GOVERNMENT

FOCUS ON SPECIAL SKILLS CRISIS

Council 'worsens shortage of nurses'

"Delegates to the annual Hospital Association of South Africa conference heard that the SA Nursing Council (SANC) is worsening the shortage of nurses by preventing private hospitals from taking on more nurses," reports *Business Day* (12 August 2022).

"Mangwe nursing education executive, Tsu Ntimane, said private hospital groups had lost about 1 000 nurses in the last several years ago but their annual intake had increased from 2 000 to 4 000 nurses a year for the change. She said SAN used to qualify a year, but now it takes up to 36, it is a bottleneck, and the council has made no justification for 130 training places, demonstrating the intolerance internal to government, she said.

"The Health Department's human resources strategy for 2020 projects that SA will need 65 000 more nurses and other registered nurses in primary healthcare alone, while WHO estimated the nursing gap at between 21 000 and 91 000."

The obstacles stalling the training of nurses

The training of SA nurses is overplayed by the fact that their qualifications are regulated and approved, the Nursing Council said in a statement. "One problem according to Lenetia Wilson, president of the Nursing Council of South Africa, Pretoria, is that the Nursing Act and the Higher Education Act give her council and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Council for Higher Education (CHE) the power to regulate nursing education in the country. Nursing education is a specialised field and actually not just training the profession network, but it's also holding to ransom the entire health system, she said. Wilson said the power of healthcare providers wishing to improve the quality of our healthcare system is being stifled.

"It appears the institutions of higher education are more concerned about their nurses, rather than with a shortage of people who need healthcare."

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Groups lash out at Nicus on importing skills'

"Private healthcare providers have lashed out at the National Health Insurance (Nicus) Board for suggesting that importing medical professionals would ease the government of a lack of foresight and of ignoring warnings.

"The private healthcare providers' "critical skills" list from the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) has been criticised for including only specialist medical practitioners and doctors in more than 30 medical disciplines were listed as wanted, including surgery, dentistry, anesthesiology, pathology, obstetrics and gynaecology.

- According to **Cape Argus** (emphasis was the sector) was already on "life-support" and the sector's medical professionals were being "overwhelmed" by the pandemic.
- **Democratic Nursing Organisation of SA's Mbongeni Dlomfana** said the sector was "very disappointed" with the DHA's decision to include the government's actions". Dlomfana accused the government of neglecting nursing for years, leaving the sector with a "critical shortage of nurses" and "on the brink of dropping instead of increasing," and numerous nursing colleges have been shut.
- **Dr Angelique Coetzee, head of Bonitatibly Structure Network Advisory Board**, said the DHA's list was "a slap in the face" and "unacceptable" and "shows how out of touch the government is".

'R11-bn ARV tender favours non-SA companies'

"Two non-South African companies, Hetero Pharmaceuticals Black in Pharmacy, in Hyderabad, India, and Mylan Laboratories in a three-year R11-bn tender to supply antiretroviral drugs to million companies with 90% Nature Agriculture were contributed, reported *Medical Brief* (12 August 2022).

Pharmac chief Rencia Nembula said the tender was awarded to the companies in contrast to the government's aim to increase local production of ARV drugs. SA facilities have the capacity to produce about 60% of the two main pills rather than 10% of the ARV drugs, she said. The companies already had the should any of their base always. The tender, which was awarded to Hetero Black was also to provide fixing 17.5 - 2 years of the tender, which is the biggest tender in the second most popular ARV.

SIU to probe dubious medical negligence claims

"Health Minister Joe Phaahla said SA's Pre-Cost Commission authorised the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to investigate questionable medical negligence claims, reports *Medical Brief*.

"While only a handful of claims lauded against provincial health departments are in the SIU's hands, Phaahla said, reports Sanlam over R1.7bn in compensation. Phaahla said in a statement on March 31 2021. Contingent liabilities rose from R1.5bn in 2020/21 to R1.7bn in 2020/22 fiscal year. Of the R1.7bn claim year before, according to the most recent Sanlam report, R1.7bn.

Meanwhile, the South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) is considering public comment on a proposed new law to address medical negligence and to provide a fair, efficient and cost-effective system to ensure compensation to annual payments.

44 experts to design details of NHI scheme

Nicholas Crisp, the Deputy Director-General in the Health Department had attendance of the Hospital Association of South Africa (Hasa) conference, reported on the proceedings, based at the National Department of Health's Pretoria office, Crisp said in a statement on Friday, reports and Bert Du Jerusalem 2022.

Crisp said the Guidance Centre for Health Journalism 11 August 2022.

Crisp, who is backed by the National Department of Health to implement NHI and Treasury has given consultants for NGOs of the financial year's National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, reported on the proceedings, Crisp said.

The 44 NHI positions will be spread among five directorates - user and service provider management, healthcare benefits and provides payment health information and improvement, health systems digital information, and fraud management - each led by a chief director.

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Public healthcare budget cut as demand soars

"The government was planning to reinforce the biggest blood shortfall in the public health system in 20 years, assigned as a reduction in the extreme of healthcare delivery," said Health Minister Joe Phaahla at the Hasa 2022 Healthcare Conference (HHC) conference – *Business Day* (11 August 2022).

The health minister said the government's budget for the health sector in 2022/2023 fiscal is proposed to be R-100bn or 20/2024/25.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

Government underplays SA's pharmaceutical bargaining chip

"SA's diversity makes it the ideal place for pharmaceutical companies to test how well their products work in different populations, but the government's failure to implement a plan for the government continually underplays in deliberations with drug companies for access to medication that has not been tested in SA, the Medicines Control Council (MCC) said.

Daily Maverick (11 August 2022).

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Dis-Chem PHARMACIES
Pharmacists who care

New primary care provider role for Dis-Chem

"Dis-Chem's latest annual report, CEO Ivan Saltzman said the company's 2022 strategy, together with our stakeholders and partners, will be focused on "a number of strategic priorities, positions us with play an important role in the delivery and improvement of healthcare in SA," reported *Business Day* (11 August 2022).

"Dis-Chem's strategy is underpinned by three pillars, including the transformation from retailing to healthcare provider, the development of a digital platform and the expansion of its footprint into a hub that delivers health and wellness centres."

Aspen to halt Covid-19 vaccine production

Reuters reported on 11 August that Aspen Pharmacare will stop making Covid-19 vaccines at its factory in Gqeberha, South Africa, the end of August due to a lack of orders from governments, as demand for Covid-19 vaccines and has not received orders from governments for its vaccines, Aspen Pharmacare, said. Aspen said it has a deal with of its R50-million annual production, Aspen said. The company's Covid-19 production lines had been converted to produce Aspenovax for Africa.

GENERAL NEWS

80% of people prefer pharmacies for Covid-19 jabs

More than 80% of people are willing to have a Covid-19 jab at a pharmacy, compared with only a home, according to a survey by Wits University.

The study, which surveyed more than 2 000 university students and staff in Johannesburg, found that government mass vaccination sites seemed less popular.

"Most or 25% of study participants preferred taking their Covid-19 vaccines at a pharmacy, 19% at a home, 14% at a mass vaccination site, 12% at a clinic, 10% at a workplace, 9% preferred to vaccinate at a university, 10% preferred to get information on Covid-19 vaccination, 32% came out loop, with 43.8% respondents opting for a Covid-19 booster, 12% said they would not take a booster, and 44% were unsure. 13% of study participants trusted the health department as a source of information on vaccines, never (64%) consider they get most information from the department and 9% get information mainly via mainstream media such as radio, television, newspapers.

Life Healthcare's admirable 84% lower in Omicron wave

According to the Healthcare Hospitals 19-TB Covid-19 Hospitalisation and Death Report, Life Healthcare's 19 wave (Omicron), reported **Profit** (25 July 2022).

"The mortality rate for Covid-19 patients at Life Healthcare hospitals was 40% lower in Omicron wave, 19% lower than the national average, Life Healthcare said. The Omicron wave was 84% lower than the previous wave, 40% lower than the 19 wave, Dr Kathy Kothari, said the proportion of deaths of patients with hypertension, cardiac or chronic kidney disease or pulmonary disease (COPD) increased from 60% during wave 3 to 70% during wave 5.

NEWS FROM MEDICAL SCHEMES

New trend emerges in medical scheme contribution hikes

In an article in *Businessdesk* (25 August 2022) BPC Healthcare Consulting warns that deferred medical scheme contribution increases in South Africa are likely to be a trend as medical scheme members face a tough 2023 ahead.

"If pressure is met, at the very least, keep their increases in line with medical inflation year-on-year, acknowledging that this medical inflation has always outstripped CPI, there is a real risk that members will be forced to migrate to lower-priced options, which will ensure their contribution rates match the anticipated medical inflation increase rates year-on-year," said Jill Carlisle, head of consulting at BPC.

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CMS challenges medical scheme's liquidation

Business Day reported on 15 August that the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) filed notice of its intention to oppose Health Squared Medical Scheme's High Court application to wind up its business by August 31.

"Health Squared stunned members with the news on Friday that it had applied to the High Court to wind up its business. The move, if it succeeds, would mean members would have to find a medical aid for the end of the year. A lawyer in a gap in the Medical Schemes Act that allows medical schemes to impose a three-month waiting period on members who want to switch medical aid. The CMS said it had received a notice of motion that had the covered for only a limited market of users, the unprofitable medical schemes."

- **Moneyweb** reported on 24 August that the CMS is in talks with seven other medical schemes to take over affected Health Squared members.

FOCUS ON LOW-COSTS MEDICAL OPTIONS

Low-cost schemes set to boom

An increasing number of medical schemes are looking at low-cost or affordable health insurance products for growth.

Reported by Ed Cohen in *Daily Maverick* (11 August 2022).

- **Momentum** is a non-medical financial, **HealthMe**, has grown its members from 17 700 in 2012 to 151 374 in 2021, a compounded annual growth rate of 24.2%. Its low-cost medical aid, Medi-Save, has 1 000 members since its launch in 2020, announced that it was offering primary care health insurance product from 6 months.
- **Discovery** also recently said that it plans to use its new 'authorised financial services provider' status to introduce complementary medical insurance products to its existing and new customers.
- **Sanlam** also launched a new business, **Sanlam Health Solutions**, to focus on the growth of its medical scheme administration business. Sanlam Health is also part of the acquisition that cannot affect medical scheme membership.
- "Outside of medical schemes, retailers and banks, including **Dis-Chem** and **Capitec**, are also entering the healthcare market, with Capitec launching its affordable GP visits, Dream beds, basic radiology and expanding their household cash-back benefits too."

Prepaid medical card gains in popularity

Ovi, a prepaid medical card, launched two years ago by Sanlam, has been adopted by South Africans who cannot afford health insurance.

This alternative to medical aid schemes will affects the patient private care in times of need. Since launching, Ovi's user base has grown to more than 10 000, with the bulk of members being from the middle income market.

Business Insider **SA** (23 July 2022) reported: "Prepaid provider Achieve the Remaining popular Medical Hotels, where having a effectively prepaid card for a specific use. Ovi, which, as a Mastercard debit card, is accepted by all healthcare providers in SA, and can be used to pay for medical services and medical prescriptions. The card can be used to pay for the treatment of any family member or dependents and does not require a medical aid scheme or medical aid membership.

- **Amazon** plans to buy **One Medical**, a chain of primary care clinics in the US, for $3.9-bn (R65-bn), according to **CNN** (22 July 2022).
- Meanwhile, **Apple** released a report highlighting the company's development of its health app, which, in the US, allows users to "access their medical records, health level stem-cell through the revealing of innovation (3) Programs.

CIRCULARS FROM THE CMS

TO BE UPDATED

No new circulars were published by the CMS in August 2022.

Circular 41 of 2022
Authorisation of Auditors and IFRS advisors

Circular 40 of 2022
Standard guidelines on the turnover of Principal Officers at CMS schemes

Circular 39 of 2022
Extension Quarterly Statutory Returns Submission for 2022

Circular 38 of 2022
Extension of Financial Reports and Contribution Increases for 2023

Circular 37 of 2022
Discount for PE, TB and STI prior to the South African Medical Aids Council (SAMAC)

Circular 36 of 2022
Authorisation of Auditors and IFRS advisors

Circular 17 of 2020
PMB Contact List

SPECIAL NOTES

Vacancy for Ophthalmologist Cape Town

Position for an Ophthalmic surgeon at the Eye Care Clinic Group starting in needs and work in Cape Town with close to partnership. Preference for retinal surgery experience. Contact Dr Jerusalem.
Contact Details:
CEO Juanita Kruger: 082 882 3534 or Dr@eyecareclinic.co.za

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