



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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HealthMan New Year's Newsletter to follow shortly

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Top 10 Health Issues in 2022

according to Daily Maverick (17 January 2022)



"Covid-19 will continue to dominate headlines in 2022, but from National Health Insurance to the availability of a new HIV prevention injection, it will also be an important year for other areas of health service delivery and for health system governance and reforms in South Africa," reported *Daily Maverick* (17 January 2022).

The Top 10 issues listed are:

1. COVID-19 corruption – will we finally see significant prosecutions?
2. Will the NHI Bill become law this year?
3. Ballooning medico-legal cases: Will government manage to rein it in?
4. Will the country get a reprieve from the impact of budget cuts on health?
5. Will HIV prevention injections become available in SA in 2022?
6. Will the COVID-19 pandemic subsidy in 2022?
7. Will SA's tuberculosis response recover and improve in 2022?
8. Will the health department walk the talk on resourcing the National Mental Health Policy Framework?
9. Will new legislation aimed at improving public procurement make it to Parliament?
10. What will happen to the no-fault compensation fund?

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'World needs to press Covid-19 reset button in 2022'

The world must 'accept Covid-19 is here to stay' and the goal remains 'minimising severe disease and death', Prof Shabir Madhi, Dean of Health Sciences at Wits University and a professor of vaccinology, told Tanya Farber, *Sunday Times* (31 December 2021).

Madhi said the world is in a good space to get back to normality in the first quarter of 2022, but "we will need to recalibrate how we continue surveillance and become less excited each time there is a new variant."

To read the article, click on the button below:

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'Insufficient capacity' hampers NHI Bill



"South Africa's Parliament is expected to deal with several important pieces of legislation in 2022, including issues around land expropriation and healthcare," reported *BusinessTech* (5 January 2022).

The National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill seeks to realise that every South African "will have a right to access comprehensive healthcare services free of charge at the point of use at accredited health facilities such as clinics, hospitals and private health practitioners". However, in its Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), Treasury said that a limited costing of the NHI policy proposal would require about R40-bn annually in additional funding in the first five years and likely considerably more over time.

"At present there is insufficient capacity in the health sector to work substantively on NHI. The NHI indirect grant has been under-spent, the NHI Fund has not yet been established, and the NHI Bill still needs to be passed by parliament," according to the Treasury.

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NEWS FROM GOVERNMENT



91 trainee doctors in dire straits

Health-e News reported on 13 January, that 91 trainee doctors, who have completed their internships in the Eastern Cape, are unable to seek employment elsewhere as their contract with the government stipulates that they have to work within the province for five years after being awarded bursaries.

Dr Mawande Dlamini, the spokesperson for the professionals, said their professional future is on hold due to the department's ineptitude. He blamed the Eastern Cape Health Department of serious mismanagement and maladministration. Eastern Cape health spokesperson, Yonela Dekeda, said the department needs R358-m to appoint 634 nurses, 128 allied and medical health categories, including 91 medical doctors.

'Healthcare workers take their fight to Ramaphosa'

City Press reported on 16 January, that thousands of healthcare workers who were contracted by the Eastern Cape Department of Health to assist during the Covid-19 pandemic - and have not been paid yet - demand to speak to the Minister and Director-General. They started protesting, picketing and sleeping outside the National Health Department. According to a spokesperson for Provincial Health the department hoped to offer the healthcare workers employment once its financial position improved, but there was no guarantee that it would be able to do so.

Meanwhile, the NGO Gift of the Givers, is assisting by sending foodstuffs to more than 40 hospitals across the province to feed patients.

ADVERTORIAL

Lingering effect of Covid-19 on the workplace



"Some common terms used to describe post-Covid symptoms include long-Covid, long-haul Covid, post-Covid syndrome as well as post-acute COVID-19 syndrome," says Jacqui Nel, Business Unit Head of Healthcare at Aon South Africa.



"It is critical that employers proactively recognise and implement an environment where engagement, education and encouragement is embraced and practiced."

To read the article, click on the button below:

[Covid-19 in the Workplace](#)

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS



Africa CDC talking to Pfizer to supply Covid-19 drug

Africa's top public health body, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is in talks with Pfizer to secure supplies of its antiviral Paxlovid pills for treating Covid-19, reported *Reuters* (13 January 2022).

"Paxlovid is almost 90% effective in preventing hospitalisation and deaths, and data suggests it retains its efficacy against Omicron. Governments around the world are scrambling to buy Paxlovid while Merck's Molnupiravir has faced setbacks after disappointing trial data."

African states battle to turn vaccine supplies into shots

Only 9,5% of Africa's population of 1.3-bn has been vaccinated against Covid-19 "as dozens of countries are struggling to turn supplies into inoculations," reported *Bloomberg News* (11 January 2022). Covax, the World Health Organisation (WHO)-backed global access programme, has been hurt by export bans and production delays, and some vaccine producers have not honoured their contracts, according to the WHO.

Meanwhile, the WHO has drawn up a list of 20 countries on the continent that are at high risk of missing the target of vaccinating 70% of their populations later in 2022. Experts are set to be deployed to these countries.

Sanofi faces class-action lawsuit over epilepsy drug



"A French court has ruled that families of children who suffered side effects from the epilepsy medicine Depakine can join in a class-action lawsuit against drug maker Sanofi," reported *Bloomberg News* on 5 January, 2022.

The company should have warned of the risk of birth defects for pregnant women taking the medicine as early as 1984, a Paris court said. Instead, it only took those steps in 2003, calling the product that was sold for decades "defective".

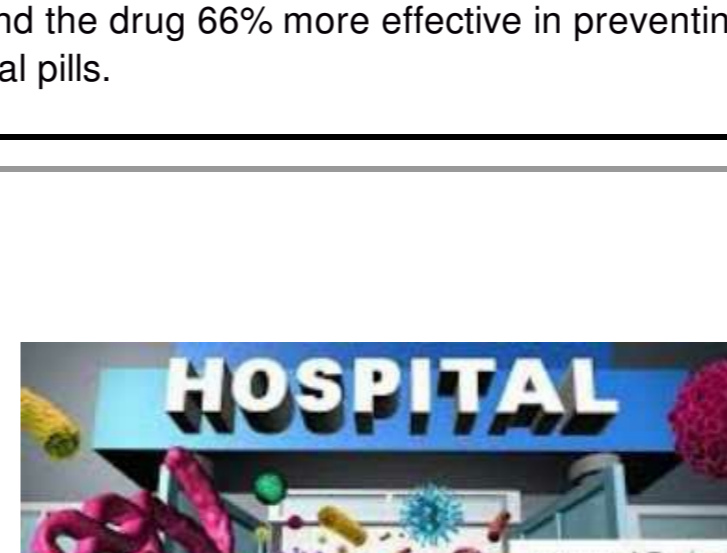
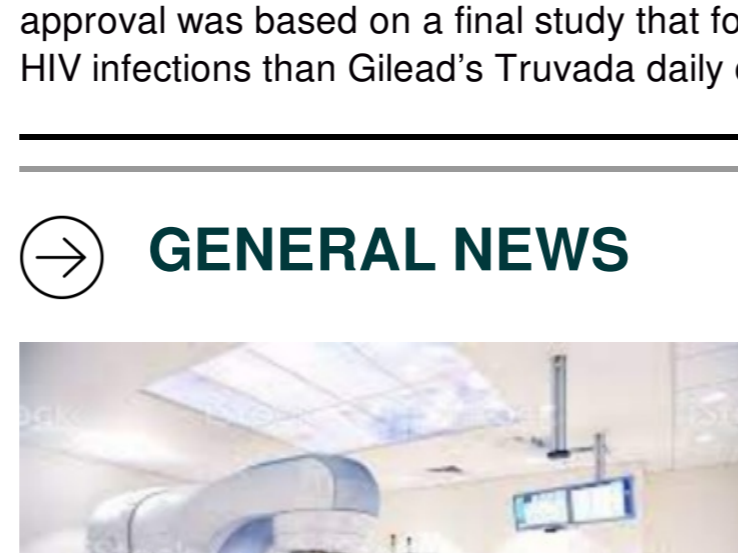
Depakine is a powerful anti-epileptic drug that is on the World Health Organisation's list of essential medicines, but it has been blamed for neuro-development problems in tens of thousands of children in a long-running court case in Sanofi's home market.



FDA approves first injectable treatment to prevent HIV

In December 2021, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an injectable form of GlaxoSmithKline's (GSK) cabotegravir drug that is given every two months to prevent an HIV infection. The injection, Apretude, is aimed as an alternative to daily pills and has been approved for use in at-risk adults and adolescents. Its first two doses are administered one month apart and then the injection is given every two months. The approval was based on a final study that found the drug 66% more effective in preventing HIV infections than Gilead's Truvada daily oral pills.

GENERAL NEWS



Cancer patients wait while new machines are in storage

In December, *Sunday Times* reported that two new cancer-treatment machines, worth more than R100-m, have been in storage for more than a year, while state hospitals turn away an increasing number of patients.

The Linear Accelerator (Linac) machines, which deliver high-energy X-rays or electrons to destroy cancer cells, need to be housed in protective bunkers that have not been built yet.

A spokesperson of Gauteng Health did not answer when asked when the projects would be completed and said it had been "delayed by Covid-19 disruptions". The equipment was earmarked for the Chris Hani Baragwanath and Dr George Mukhari hospitals.

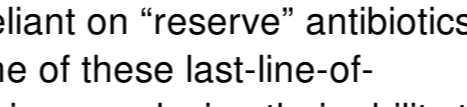
SA hospitals face worrying rise in drug-resistant bacteria

Researchers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) found a significant increase in certain antibiotic-resistant bacteria in several public and private hospitals across the country, as well as a dramatic increase in the use of so-called "last resort" antibiotics in public hospitals over the last five years," reported *Daily Maverick* (6 January 2022).

According to the study, published in *The Lancet*, the increased procurement of such drugs shows that doctors are increasingly reliant on "reserve" antibiotics.

"But even some of these last-line-of-defence medicines are losing their ability to fight bacterial infections due to misuse, overuse and other factors. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the 21st century's greatest threats to health."

Hospital-at-home to relieve some Covid-19 problems

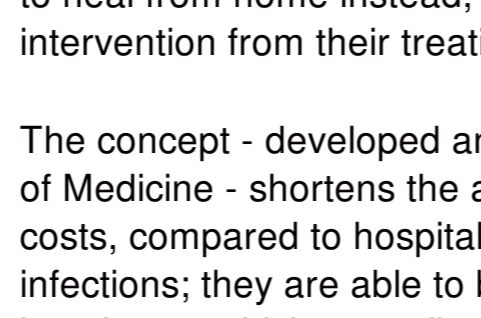


A new innovation, hospital-at-home (HAH), could help the healthcare industry to cope with Covid-19 related problems, such as a lack of resources, bed capacity and healthcare workers being stretched beyond capacity.

"HAH allows patients, who would otherwise be admitted into a general ward in a hospital, to heal from home instead, with 24-hour remote vital-sign monitoring and active clinical intervention from their treating doctor," reported *BizCommunity* (7 January 2022).

The concept - developed and tested in 1995 by Dr John Burton of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine - shortens the average length of treatment and decreases the overall costs, compared to hospital stays. Patients are at lower risk of exposure to secondary infections; they are able to be more mobile from home; and they can be closer to their loved ones which mentally plays a big part too. For hospitals and doctors, there is reduced pressure on resources, allowing more patients to be treated remotely.

"From a medical scheme point of view, HAH and remote monitoring services are now starting to be covered from a patient's hospital plan benefit, with a shorter duration of treatment needed for HAH patients."



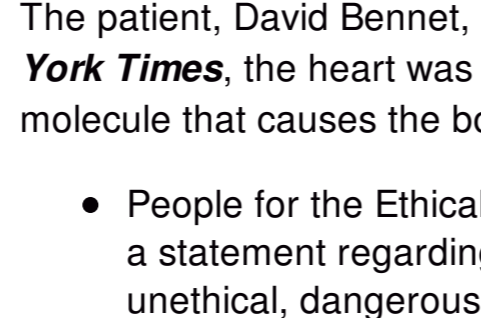
First pig-to-human heart transplant a success

Doctors at the University of Maryland School of Medicine achieved a world first by successfully transplanting a genetically modified pig heart into a human patient, reported *The Associated Press* (11 January 2022).

The patient, David Bennet, underwent the procedure on 7 January. According to the *New York Times*, the heart was genetically modified to eliminate four genes that encode a molecule that causes the body to reject the organ.

- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) released a statement regarding the procedure saying: "Animal-to-human transplants are unethical, dangerous, and a tremendous waste of resources that could be used to fund research that might actually help humans."

NEWS FROM MEDICAL SCHEMES



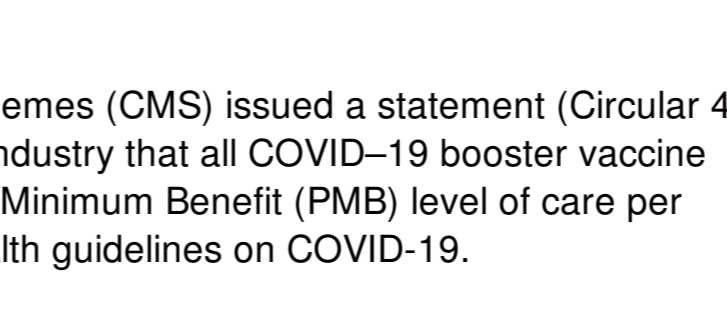
Funding of COVID-19 booster vaccines to be treated as a PMB

On 13 January, the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) issued a statement (Circular 4 of 2022) informing the medical schemes industry that all COVID-19 booster vaccine shots should be treated as a Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) level of care per National Department of Health guidelines on COVID-19.

"The funding thereof must align with PMB regulations for any eligible member or beneficiary across all medical schemes, regardless of option or plan type," according to the circular.

CIRCULARS FROM THE CMS

The following circulars were published by the CMS in January 2022.



Circular 1 of 2022:
Email system down

Circular 4 of 2022:
Funding of COVID-19 booster vaccines

Circular 2 of 2022:
Extension for MNT comments

Circular 5 of 2022:
Quarterly Statutory Returns Submission for 2021

Circular 3 of 2022:
Updated MC Agreement Preparation Guideline (ID 964390)

Circular 6 of 2022:
Categorisation of assets in terms of Annexure B to the Regulations

SPECIAL NOTES

VACANCY FOR SPECIALIST PHYSICIAN

Life West Coast Private Hospital (Vredenburg) has a vacancy for an energetic Specialist Physician to join their well-established practice.
Must be willing to work after-hours.
Life West Coast Private Hospital has 61 general ward beds and a 6-bed ICU.

For more information, email:
accounts@westcoastphysician.co.za

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