

NOTICE
HealthMan and SAPPF present the reader with a summary of the most relevant breaking news in the local and global healthcare industry...

In this Newsletter
News highlights in the healthcare sector: July - December 2021

CONTENT:
From the SAPPF Chairman: Food for Thought, Financial News
Pharmaceutical News: General News, CMS Circulars

IN THE PREVIOUS ISSUE:
In the previous issue of Private Practice Review: A summary of news highlights from July - November 2021: Food for Thought, News from Government, News from Medical Schemes and CMS Circulars

FROM THE SAPPF CHAIRMAN

CMS 'muddies waters' with Circ. 66

Just when we are engaging with schemes to have a large number of codes recognized and reimbursed, the Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) has further muddied the waters with Circular 66 in which they assert that the 2006 RPL is the last legal procedure coding system for South Africa and remains the basis for the CMS adjudicating complaints and claims.



The circular notes that several disciplines have developed new codes but warns that these cannot negatively affect members or beneficiaries of schemes. This puts us back by 15 years as the 2006 codes do not reflect healthcare as currently practised.

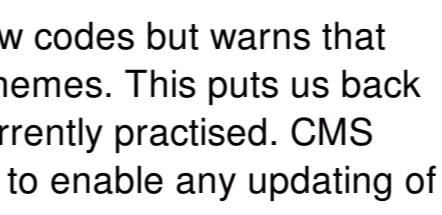
Could this be a political move to give the National Department of Health complete control of the coding structures ahead of its intended introduction of NHI?

SAPPF and SAMA met on 24 November 2021 and discussed a joint response. We will call for a high-level multi-stakeholder meeting during the first quarter of 2022 to address the coding impasse...

To read Circular 66, click on the button below

Circular 66

COIDA - Urgent action needed to oppose new regulations



On 19 October 2021, the Compensation Fund gazetted regulations for public comment. These proposed regulations will only allow Compensation Fund payments to be made directly into the accounts of healthcare service providers.

SAMA, in collaboration with workers, employers and a range of affected parties, will be opposing these regulations. Healthcare service providers have until 17 December 2021 to submit comments.

Comments should be directed via email to: commentsAVS@labour.gov.za by Friday, 17 December 2021.

HPCSA & employment of doctors Controversy around Certificate of Need

At a recent meeting between HPCSA and various stakeholders, most groups expressed their disapproval of direct employment of doctors by private hospitals.

The controversial draft regulations bear little relation to the empowering sections in the National Health Act of 2003 to the Health Market Inquiry (HMI) recommendations...

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

NHI: Stop wastage and consolidate medical schemes, says Crisp

Dr Nicholas Crisp, Deputy Director-general for National Department of Health, told delegates at the Future of Health Summit that the budget SA already spends on healthcare was enough to implement the NHI.

Crisp said critics who say the country cannot afford the scheme have not considered the structural savings that the government can realise once it has dealt with the 'structural' wastage in both the public and the private sectors.

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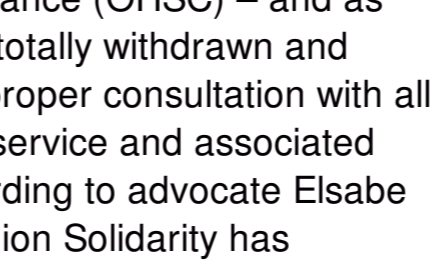
ALSO READ: What SA should do about Omicron

Prof Shabir Madhi (The Conversation, 29 November 2021)

Omicron Article

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FINANCIAL NEWS

Drugmakers to rake in billions



In July Bloomberg reported that the pharmaceutical manufacturer Pfizer is expected to see its Covid-19 vaccine become one of the best-selling medicines on record.

Vaccine sales could earn Pfizer up to \$33.5-bn in revenue, which would make it one of the best-selling medicines on record.

In August Reuters reported that drug makers Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna Inc are expected to reap billions of dollars from Covid-19 booster shots in a market that could rival the \$6-bn (about R85-bn) in annual sales for flu boosters for years to come.

*Analysts have forecast revenue of more \$6.6-bn for the Pfizer/BioNTech shot and \$7.6-bn for Moderna in 2023, mostly from booster sales.

"If regular Covid-19 boosters are needed among the general population, the market would most resemble the flu shot business, which distributes more than 600-m doses per year."

Big Business urges job mandates

Business for SA (B4SA) warned that SA must urgently accelerate its Covid-19 vaccination rate with compulsory workplace jobs and restricted access to public places as it enters its fourth wave of infections.

B4SA chair Martin Kingston said that the government had "no more fuel in the tank" to support struggling enterprises if lockdown restrictions are tightened in response to surging cases.

'Mandatory vaccination is not about coercion'

"Mandatory vaccination" has a draconian air about it, where people are vaccinated against their will and in contravention of their right to bodily autonomy.

However, the issue of mandatory vaccinations is not about issuing a society-wide decree that vaccinations will be compulsory or holding people down and jabbing them while they protest.

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Also Read: 'Government kicks vaccine mandate into touch' by clicking on the button below.

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Also read the following Financial News Highlights by clicking on the button below:

Private Hospitals still a good investment 43% linked to year's Covid-19 surge in death claims Aspen and J&J agree on Covid-19 brand

R2.2-bn 'green deal' for Mediclinic Dis-Chem founders to sell stake to black investors Medicine expenditure increased by 2.9% per beneficiary

J&J to split into separate companies Kaelo hopes Dis-Chem partnership will benefit many

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PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

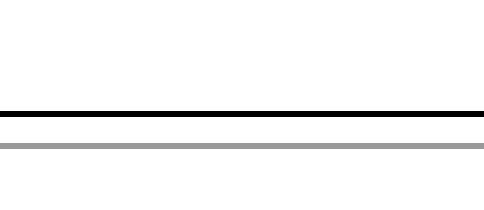
SANDF ordered to return unlicensed drug to Cuba

According to a report by the Auditor-General presented in Parliament, SA's health products regulator (SAPRA) has ordered the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to return an unregistered Covid-19 drug obtained from Cuba, or face having it confiscated and destroyed.

SANDF officials implicated in the scandal may be held personally liable for the R260-m billed by Cuba.

The unregistered drug, Heberon InterferonAlpha-2B, was imported in 2020 at the peak of the first wave of Covid-19 without the regulator's approval and stored at unlicensed premises.

Pfizer agrees to SA production of jobs



In July the state-backed vaccine distributor Biovac Institute reached an agreement with Pfizer and BioNTech to help manufacture 100-m doses of its mRNA Covid-19 vaccine a year for African countries.

In December SA's Biovac Institute announced that it will start making Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine early next year after receiving the drug substance from facilities in Europe.

Biovac's agreement with Pfizer/BioNTech is similar to that clinched last year by Aspen Pharmacare with Johnson & Johnson (J&J) to help produce its Covid-19 jab, as neither company has been licensed to make the active pharmaceutical ingredients used in the shots.

SA firm makes own vaccine Merck's cheap Covid pill

In October The Citizen reported that a SA biotech consortium is working on a messenger RNA (mRNA) jab based on the Moderna formula in a drive to end Africa's lack of Covid vaccines.

Merck's cheap Covid pill In October Business Day reported that the global health agency, United, and its partners are negotiating an agreement with Merck & Co to secure the first supplies of an experimental pill (molnupiravir) for lower- and middle-income nations.

According to Merck and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics's interim trial results, molnupiravir reduced the risk of hospitalisation or death by 50%.

The company expects to produce 10-m courses of treatment by year-end, and more expected in 2022.

Also read the following Pharmaceutical News Highlights by clicking on the button below:

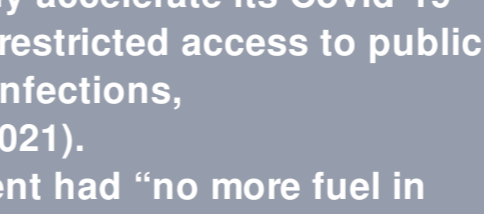
WMA calls for action on lake medicines WHO green-lights first malaria vaccine Pharmacists might soon prescribe HIV treatment

SA company to manufacture rapid Covid-19 test kits Scientists debate rule change to allow self-testing SA was waiting

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GENERAL NEWS

4 000 junior doctors 'in limbo'



"In the same year in which the Minister of Health, no less, was forced to resign in disgrace after it emerged that a business linked to his family, Digital Vibe, had scored a R150-m communications tender, the government now drags its feet on finding the money to pay graduating doctors for their community service."

*According to the SA Medical Association (SAMA), more than 4 000 interns and community service doctors have yet to be placed for work that should begin on January 1.

"To now plead poverty shows a clanging tin ear for a contingent annually contributing to SA's advancement. It also speaks to chaos within a department that is still speaking boldly about implementing National Health Insurance (NHI)."

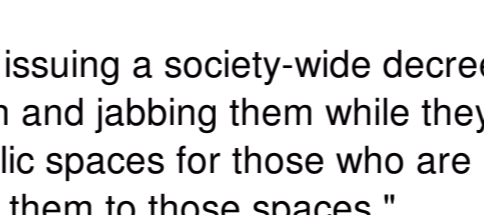
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Also read: 'Junior doctors 'led up' with delay in preliminary placements' (Times Live, 7 December 2021) by clicking on the button below:

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'Covid-19 is accelerating changes in healthcare'



In August Business Day reported that, according to Marion Markel, chief medical officer at Sanlam, Covid-19 has accelerated changes afoot in the medical profession in ways we will probably only really start seeing in five to 10 years.

"The pandemic has laid stark the terrible inequalities in access to healthcare, highlighted issues in supply chains and staffing, opened debates regarding private and public sector responsibilities and left many medical professionals wondering whether they can continue to serve.

Already, 20% to 30% of the US's healthcare workers are considering leaving the profession. Four in 10 nurses are contemplating leaving their roles as well."

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Also read a summary of General News Highlights by clicking on the button below:

Effects of Covid-19: Apathy and hesitancy lead to lack of demand for jabs Ordinary breathing behind most TB transmissions

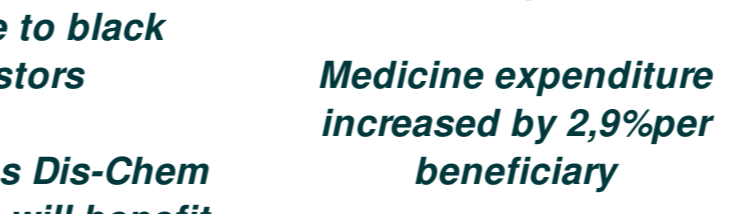
Neuro-psychological; Life expectancy; Children's healthcare; Spike in ADHD symptoms; and increase in mental distress Too beat Covid-19, fight HIV too? Single brain scan predicts tipping point for symptom onset in Alzheimer's

Most masks ineffective 32-m J&J vaccines expected to Europe, while SA was waiting

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CIRCULARS FROM THE CMS

The following circulars were published by the CMS in November/December 2021



Circular 64 of 2021: Vaccine booster admin fee Circular 66 of 2021: Medical Nutrition Therapy PMB def

Circular 65 of 2021: Bonitas Medical Fund and Nedgroup Medical Aid Scheme merge Circular 69 of 2021: List of benefits options for open schemes for 2022 benefit year

Circular 66 of 2021: Practice Coding System edited Circular 70 of 2021: Expanded scope of practice of optometry service providers

Circular 67 of 2021: Proposed Levies 2022/23 Circular 71 of 2021: SAICA Accounting Guide

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