



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 broadcasters, independent news agencies, newspapers, radio and news sites. HealthMan strives to quote the local South African Health Experts. The information is provided to give 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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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No money to keep state clinics open 24/7

"Financial pressure on the country's fiscus, staff shortages and security concerns are just some of the reasons why most state clinics and primary healthcare facilities cannot operate 24 hours a day," reported **News24** (22 October 2020). This was revealed following a private member's bill by EFF MP Dr Sophie Suzan Themboke, proposing that government clinics operate 24/7. DoH chief director of district health systems, Ramphela Morenane, said given the country's current financial stress, it would struggle to adjust the budget against the health requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In light of this admission by the government that they cannot afford to keep clinics open 24 hours a day, one has to wonder how they will afford to keep private hospitals open 24 hours a day – are they really paying for every clinic closed in the private sector under NHI?" Johann Sertfontein – HealthMan Senior Consultant.

'Can South Africa afford National Health Insurance?'

"An exodus of South African healthcare professionals has gathered momentum in the face of uncertainty over how they will be affected by the NHI," wrote **Mariam Isa** (**FinWeek**, 20 October 2020).

"Many top health professionals warn that the NHI overlooks - perhaps deliberately - the crisis in the public health system, which has deteriorated rapidly over the past decade. They argue that the new entity will fail to achieve what is most important - rehabilitating public healthcare and regulating private healthcare, which is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

"The noisy propagation of the NHI concept, and the extended timeline for implementation, masks the continuing deterioration of public services, according to Aslam Daxoo, a doctor who co-convened the Progressive Health Forum, a voluntary association of health experts from the private sector, and a member of the ANC Stalwarts and Veterans group.

"At best, it will be used as a political fig leaf by a health administration that is being exposed daily as not being up to the task it is constitutionally obliged to perform."

Power grab or tying loose ends? - Mkhize's proposed health regulations

Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize's proposed amendments to regulations on notifiable medical conditions (October 13) came under fire in Parliament with some opposition parties slamming it as an attempt to give the minister, "through the back door", powers which will "allow him and the executive to impose far-reaching restrictions".

Should Cabinet approve the proposed amendments to the regulations, it will give Mkhize powers to impose restrictions similar to, but not on the same scale, as those imposed under the Disaster Management Act (DMA) during the country's state of disaster first declared in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March.

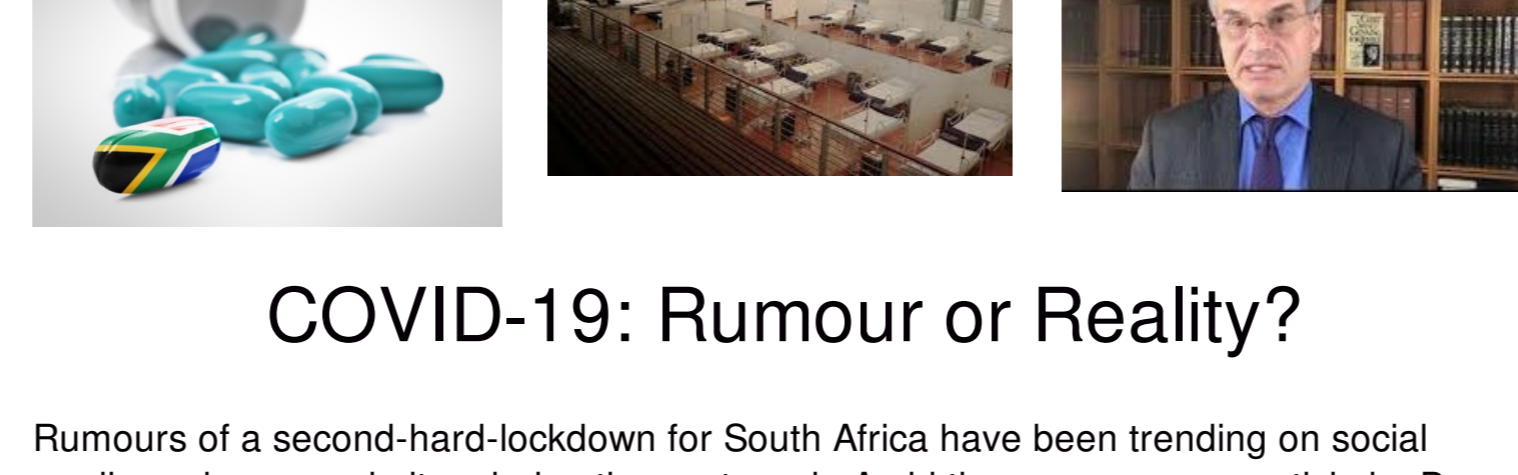
Public health and medical law experts welcomed the proposed amendments to the regulations and even made some suggestions on how it could be improved, reported **Alicestine October** (**Daily Maverick**, 16 October 2020)

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Health Minister tests positive for COVID-19

On October 18, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize revealed that he and his wife have contracted COVID-19. Mkhize said he has notified the people he had been in contact with in the past few days, which included family members and some staff in the Health Ministry.



COVID-19: Rumour or Reality?

Rumours of a second-hard-lockdown for South Africa have been trending on social media and news websites during the past week. Amid these rumours an article by Dr. Reiner Fuellmich was published on the Mercola website, (**Coronavirus Fraud Scandal — The Biggest Fight Has Just Begun**). Fuellmich (a consumer protection trial lawyer in California and Germany for 26 years and one of four founding members of the German Corona Extra-Parliamentary Inquiry Committee) states that he and his colleagues came to the conclusion that lockdowns were unnecessary, and any claim to the contrary is wrong:

- The three reasons why lockdowns were and are unnecessary:
- Lockdowns were imposed at a time when the virus was already in retreat and infection rates were starting to decline;
 - Scientific evidence shows a majority of people already have built-in protection against the virus due to cross-reactive T-cell immunity from exposure to cold and flu viruses; and
 - The PCR test — which is being used as a gauge of infection rates and a justification for restrictive measures — "do not give any indication of an infection with any virus let alone an infection with SARS-CoV-2".

To read the article, click on the link below:

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NEWS ON GOVERNMENT

Senior staff vacuum hits Gauteng Health

The Gauteng Health Department has a bill of over R3-m from April to September in acting allowances to officials after senior managers have been suspended on allegations of corruption related to the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE). The department has more than 78 senior management vacancies at head office and hospitals, reported **The Star** (19 October 2020).

The former Gauteng health MEC, Dr Bandile Masuku, was relieved of his duties following investigations by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) into PPE procurement; and **CEO Kabelo Lehloanya** resigned in June and her pension pay-out has been frozen by the SIU. The same was done with department head **Professor Mkhululi Lukhele**, who quit while on cautionary suspension.

DA Gauteng health spokesperson, Jack Bloom, said despite promises from Premier David Makhura that hospital chief executive posts would be filled, this has still not been done.

COVID-19 Coronavirus

Cases: 27 October 2020
716,759
Deaths: 19,008
Recovered: 646,721

Three key indicators of COVID-19 infections

According to University of KwaZulu-Natal epidemiologist, Salim Abdool Karim, who is also co-chair of the Minister's advisory committee on COVID-19, he was monitoring three key indicators of COVID-19:

- the seven-day moving average of new infections confirmed by laboratories;
- the seven-day moving average of hospital admissions; and
- the test positivity rate which measures the number of positive tests against the number performed.

FINANCIAL NEWS

Mediclinic reports C-19 profit hit

Private hospital group Mediclinic has recovered slightly after its first half profits for 2020 have fallen by about a third, due to COVID-19. The group took a severe hit in its first half as patients stayed away from hospitals and delayed optional surgical procedures. Earnings before interest, taxation, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA), fell 33% to about R3.6-bn in its six months to end-September. Since August, surgical case volumes have improved, driven by a return in demand for elective procedures. As a result, Mediclinic Southern Africa revenue was down about 6% in September.

Clicks online store sales explode

Clicks reported that the company's online growth platform had become their largest and fastest-growing store. Clicks invested in e-commerce and its digital platform over the past four years and was reaping the benefits of this, reported **Business Report** (23 October 2020). The group lifted diluted headline earnings per share by 13.7% to 754c for the year to August 2020. A dividend of 450c per share was declared, 37.6% up on last year's time. Turnover increased by 9.6% to R34.4-bn and taxed profit grew by 11.8%. Clicks opened 39 stores in the year and the pharmacy network was increased to 585.

PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

Support for call to scrap global C-19 medicine patents

A group of more than 40 SA academics, researchers and teachers have joined the international support for the SA and Indian governments' proposal that global intellectual property rights should not apply to COVID-19 medicines. On 15 and 16 October this proposal was before the World Trade Organisation for consideration. The states failed to agree on what to do and the decision has been deferred to future meetings. In addition, 40 SA civil societies working together under the banner of the Fix the Patent Laws Coalition, has also voiced its support for the proposal through a joint statement in order to hasten reform in South Africa's own patent laws.

Trial on MMR vaccine approved The SA health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) has approved the local arm of an international clinical trial to investigate whether the childhood vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) can protect healthcare workers from COVID-19. 30 000 workers around the world are taking part in the trial and more evidence than that some vaccines provide broader benefits than protecting people from the disease they target.	Biovac SA wants to make C-19 vaccine The Biovac Institute, a Cape Town-based joint venture between the government and private sector, is in talks with the global COVID-19 vaccine distribution scheme and pharmaceutical companies to produce some of the vaccines SA needs to protect itself against the disease, reported Reuters (14 October 2020). According to Biovac CEO, Morena Makhoana, the company could produce up to 30-m doses of COVID-19 vaccines per year.	Africa launches genomics initiative On October 12, the African Union (AU) announced the launch of the Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative, a \$100-m four-year programme supported by international partners, which will produce data for a 'precision public health response' to the pandemic, reported Times Daily (16 October 2020). Genomics showed how the virus was mutating, which affects the reliability of test results as well as whether a vaccine candidate will be successful or not.
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GENERAL NEWS

More TB cases than previously thought

According to the latest WHO World TB Report about 380 000 people fell ill with TB in SA in 2019. However, there is a 95% chance that the real number is in the range 250 000 to 489 000.

About 210 000 (58%) of the estimated 360 000 people with TB in 2019 were diagnosed, suggesting that around 150 000 were never diagnosed. The WHO estimates that about 58 000 people died of TB in SA in 2019. About 38 000 of the 58 000 people thought to have died of TB were also HIV-positive. The WHO estimates that 10-m people fell ill with TB in 2019 and 1.4-m people died of TB in 2019 (including people coinfected with HIV). In 2019, TB killed more people than any other single infectious agent, including HIV.

Clinic start-up to tackle deadly diseases and bridge the socio-economic gap

A nurse-led private clinic, based on a distinct digital platform, aims to tackle chronic diseases and bridge the SA healthcare sector's socioeconomic gap, reported **Daily Maverick** (17 October 2020).

Alma Clinics, founded by entrepreneur Sibongile ManganyiRath and data/IT specialist Marcello Di Mauro, focus on empowering patients and nurses through preventative medicine that uses technology to improve efficiencies and remove human error. A user-friendly two-sided app, Abecare, acts as the clinical support platform upon which the clinic functions.

Breast cancer deaths have increased by 20%

Research from insurer 1Life shows that breast cancer deaths have increased by 20% over the past four months, indicating that breast cancer patients have been avoiding going for treatment. Discovery Health Scheme's latest data - compared with last year - shows that there has been a 44% reduction in breast cancer diagnoses, and a 51% reduction in mammograms performed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, cancer remains one of the leading causes of death and dread disease claims in the life assurance industry. According to Life Assurer Momentum, Myriad cancer accounted for 32% of total death claims and 42% of total claims for women last year. (October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.)

SA's growing coronavirus fatigue - survey

According to the latest survey by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 46% of respondents believed they are unlikely to get COVID-19 in the months ahead; 41% thought the threat of the coronavirus is exaggerated; and 23% had been to a funeral or religious service with more than 50 people before the restrictions on social gatherings were eased.

The first round of the survey on "pandemic fatigue" had 12 312 respondents and was carried out between April 13 and May 11, when strict lockdown restrictions were in force. The second round had 7 666 respondents, and was conducted between July 3 and September 8, as lockdown restrictions were beginning to ease.

MPS announces new grade for Medical Protection

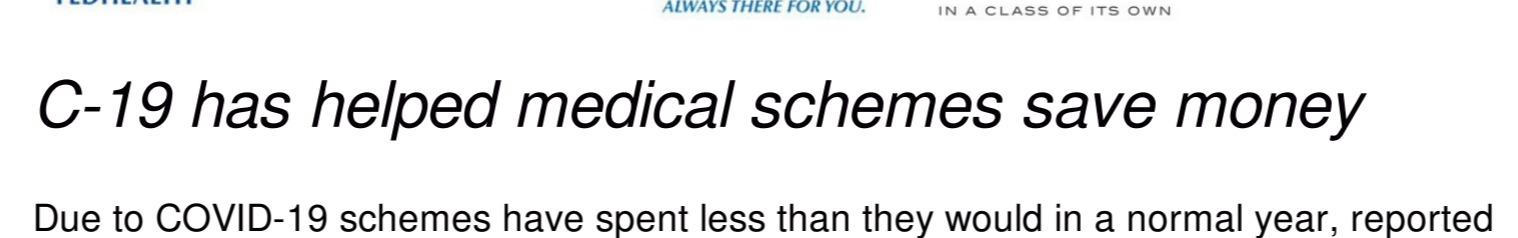
The Medical Protection Society (MPS) has announced that new grades are available from November 1, for Medical Protection Membership if a private practice's hours have been reduced. There are three new bandings of limited hours, more than 33 hours per week is considered to be full time:

- A grade for members working up to an average of 11 hours per week
- A grade for members working +11 hours and up to 22 hours per week on average
- A grade for members working > 22 hours and up to of 33 hours per week on average

Practitioners who would like to request to be moved onto a limited hours grade, can review the information by clicking on the button below.

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NEWS ON MEDICAL SCHEMES



C-19 has helped medical schemes save money

Due to COVID-19 schemes have spent less than they would in a normal year, reported **Maverick Business** (26 October 2020).

The Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) issued a circular recommending that medical schemes limit their increases to 3.9% in line with the consumer price index (CPI). Only schemes that were already in financial distress before C-19 could seek higher increases, providing the CMS with a detailed motivation for such an increase.

Momentum Health announced an average contribution increase of 3.9% and **Discovery Health** has frozen all contribution increases until July next year with the promise that the average increase at that stage will not exceed 5.9%. However, **Fedhealth** has decided to bring in an average weighted contribution increase of 6.8%, saying neither cutting benefits nor dipping into reserves is an option.

Please note that **SasolMed** will be administered by **Metropolitan Health Group (MHG)** from 1 January 2021

Supplement on Medical Cover Options for 2021

On October 22, **Business Day** published a supplement: **Medical Cover Options: 2021**
The supplement includes articles on:

- The CMS urges schemes to keep increases low;
- Contribution increases kept low in recognition of financial strains;
- Discovery's decision to announce zero increase for six months in the country's stressed economic climate;
- Benefit options that fit every need and pocket (CompCare);
- Picking the right plan and how to make some sensible choices in order to switch;
- Putting members in control of their own medical aid increases;
- Taking a long-term view on price structure (Bontaris);
- Bontaris crunched the numbers to find the sweet spot between sustainability and affordability; and
- Popular plan targets younger consumers

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SPECIAL NOTES

Psychiatrist practice available

Opportunity to practice independently but alongside the established practices of two clinical psychologists in a recently renovated house in Parkview, Johannesburg. The available space consists of two bright and spacious interlinking rooms - perfect for consulting and separate examination room, or secretary plus consulting room. The house, with all necessary zoning rights in place, is a block away from busy Tyronne Avenue and close to general medical practices, pharmacies and Akaso Parktown. Safe, off-street parking on site.

For more info contact **Lucy Kaplan** (083-296-1093) lucy@june22.co.za or **Richard Parry** (079-527-6813) richardparry77@gmail.com.

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