

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 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,

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Healthcare will continue to be a dilemma

wrote Marcus Low in Spotlight (25 Jan 2024). Regarding healthcare the following questions should be asked:

public servant Babita Deokaran?

- Will the government publish an implementation plan for addressing our healthcare worker crisis (we already have a good strategy) and, this is the key, put money and political capital behind its implementation? Will the new Parliament pass a good State Liability Bill (which could help
- to amending South Africa's Patents Act to better balance medicine monopolies with the right to health (as set out in a policy adopted by Cabinet back in 2018)? Will establishing the National Public Health Institute of South Africa remain • Will the government continue to ignore recommendations from the
- Competition Commission's Health Market Inquiry on how to better regulate private healthcare in South Africa (the commission's very impressive report was published in 2019)? Will the new health MECs and heads of provincial health departments, appointed after the elections, bring real change?
- "Whatever happens at the ballot box, one thing is clear: Given the rising NCD threat,
- healthcare worker shortages, budget shortfalls, and endemic corruption, whoever is in power nationally and provincially after this year's elections, will have their work cut out for them."

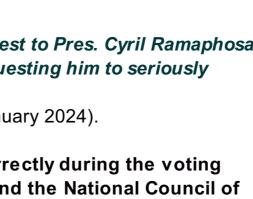
To read more, click on the button below:

Bloomberg reported on 2 February that Pres Ramaphosa is likely to sign the NHI Bill before this year's national election. The Bill has to be signed before Election

NEWS FROM GOVERNMENT

Pres Ramaphosa to waive the NHI Bill

The trade union Solidarity presented an urgent protest to Pres. Cyril Ramaphosa questioning the legality of the NHI Bill and requesting him to seriously reconsider the Bill, according a media statement (30 January 2024).



disregarded. "The NHI Bill is a financial bill as it makes tax proposals. According to the Constitution, it should therefore have been submitted to Parliament by the Treasury and the Minister of

Finance. However, this process was not followed and the legislative process is therefore invalid," says Theuns du Buisson, economic researcher at the Solidarity Research Institute (SNI).

"Solidarity appealed to Ramaphosa to waive the bill and instead improve the existing

public healthcare system in South Africa as a matter of urgency."

reported **News24** (17 Jan 2024).

Shortfall, a global issue

healthcare through the NHI have also contributed to this trend."

locum positions

other doctors absent due to illness or vacation).

for pathology lab "After missing three deadlines, the new Johannesburg Forensic Pathology Service (FPS) laboratory has still

"The R588m state-of-the-art facility was meant to open at the Helen Joseph Hospital

"It was initially meant to replace the Hillbrow Forensic Pathology Mortuary, but the project was expanded to include an academic forensic laboratory centre with a 650-person storage facility with auditoriums, workspace, and observation rooms for police, medical professionals and students."

Meanwhile, SA's struggle to address its shortage is further compounded by healthcare professionals seeking opportunities abroad, reported *City Press* (28 Jan 2024). "While there are no precise statistics on the number of healthcare professionals leaving, a 2019 study tracked the career paths of 497 medical students, revealing that 6.8% had emigrated. The government's efforts to ensure equal access to quality and affordable

According to predictions by the World Health Organisation (WHO) a global shortfall of

10m health workers can be expected by 2030, primarily in lower-income countries.

...on the other hand... Unemployed junior

"The South African Medical Association Trade Union has called for urgent placement of doctors and medical interns who have completed their community service. However, the Department of Health has not yet provided solutions to address these challenges."

Health Department requests 'concrete data'

The National Department of Health (NDH) requested concrete data to verify a claim by South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU) that there are 800 unemployed

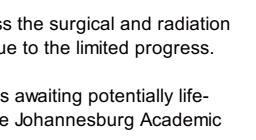
City Press reported on 28 January that the shortage of permanent jobs in the healthcare sector is forcing unemployed junior doctors in SA to rely on locum positions (filling in for

financial problems, is the main challenge facing provincial departments of health, according to the NDH. What happened to the

oncology services backlog, concerns arose in June 2023 due to the limited progress. "The backlog in the province includes around 3,000 patients awaiting potentially lifesaving radiation treatment at hospitals like Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic

Hospital and Steve Biko Academic Hospital."

money?



Hospital without

scanners for 3 weeks

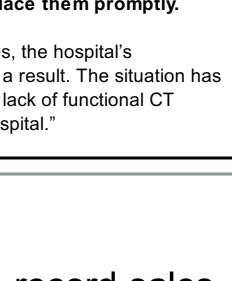
Maverick (29 Jan 2024). For nearly three weeks, the hospital had no functioning CT

The hospital management did not renew maintenance and warranty contracts for the scanners, making it difficult to repair or replace them promptly. "Despite efforts to negotiate contracts and address the issues, the hospital's management has been slow to act, with patients suffering as a result. The situation has reached a critical point, with people actively dying due to the lack of functional CT scanners and an inefficient image archiving system at the hospital."

FINANCIAL NEWS

MICLICKS 🕀

decline in wholesale turnover.



"Wellness retailer Clicks announced nearly a 12% growth in interim retail sales, thanks to its stores expanding their market presence across essential product categories," reported News24 (23 Jan 2023).

"The company disclosed an 11.8% increase in retail sales during the first 20 weeks of its

2024 fiscal year. The only drawback was the performance of its medicine distribution business, UPD, which saw a 6.3% decrease in total managed turnover and a 0.8%

WHO addresses scarcity of antivenom in Africa

based in Johannesburg. **GENERAL NEWS**

brain-computer interface (BCI) implant.

Neuralink implants

paralysis and neurological conditions."

SA leads HIV/Aids vaccine research

The South African Medical

The consortium comprises

prominent South African

scientists and leading

scientists from Nigeria,

Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania,

financially supported by the

Zimbabwe, Zambia, and

Mozambique.

resources.

"The consortium is

Cholera vaccination Malaria vaccine for children campaign Cameroon is launching a Reuters reported on 29 Research Council (SAMRC) January that Zimbabwe malaria vaccination initiated a cholera campaign aiming to

medicaid "As the NHI Bill stands, it would signal a profound seismic shift in the very fabric of South Africa's healthcare dynamics," wrote Craig Comrie, chairman of the Health Funders Association, in *The Citizen* (25 Jan 2024). "Currently, people who belong to medical schemes are removing the obligation from the state to fund their healthcare needs while still contributing taxes to

sustain public health services.

"Nationalising healthcare funding, as proposed under the NHI Bill, is risky, as removing

infrastructure investment and the development and long-term management of health

private funding diminishes opportunities for retaining specialist skills, general

'NHI won't get the job done'

caused 452 fatalities and

infected a total of 20,446

people in the country.

"Zimbabwe is to receive

2.3m vaccine doses from

Health Organisation (WHO).

distributed to 29 of the most

severely affected districts,

with over 892,000 doses

UNICEF and the World

The vaccines will be

already dispatched."

"As many members of medical schemes are growing older, while younger and healthier members opt for more affordable plans with reduced benefits, the cost of gap cover can exceed half of the total medical scheme payouts for certain patients," wrote Chris Bateman in *Financial Mail* (1 Feb 2024).

More patients opt for

cheaper schemes and gap

cover

Circulars published by the

Angelique Coetzee, former chair of the South African Medical Association (SAMA), advised individuals to carefully review the terms and conditions of their gap policies. She warned that the trend of patients opting for cheaper medical scheme options could lead to reduced access to healthcare and increased costs."

Iron Deficiency Anaemia as a PMB condition **SPECIAL NOTES**

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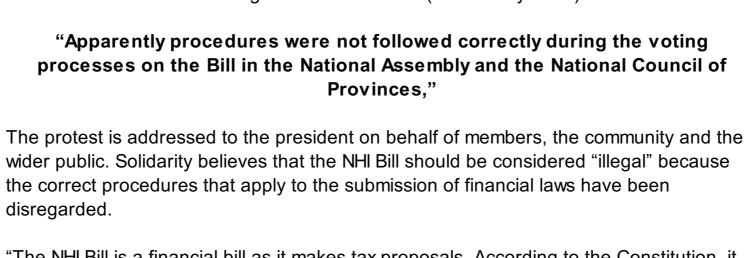
"Whether or not voters again back the ANC, some specific questions should provide a good gauge of progress in 2024,

Will we finally see convictions for the alleged corruption uncovered by

reduce the state's liability for medico-legal claims) and finally get around

Read More Day so that full implementation can occur under the new administration.

Solidarity requests



Joburg still waiting not opened its doors,"

grounds in November 2019. This date was moved to May 2022 and then to January 2023 - and there's still no sign of it opening. **Focus on Doctors**

doctors survive on

"These medical professionals are not only dealing with unemployment, but also facing challenges such as insufficient training, imbalanced staffing levels, ageing infrastructure, inadequate medical supplies, and challenging working conditions.

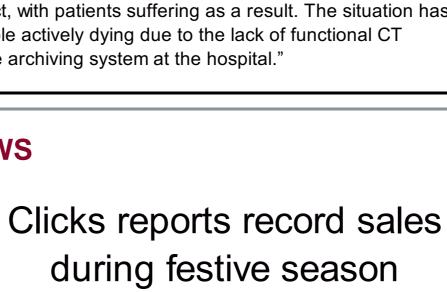
doctors, reported Daily Maverick (24 Jan 2024). This follows a list from the SA Medical Association (SAMA) refecting that less than 400 doctors claim to be unemployed. Obtaining sufficient budgets, given the country's current

According to a spokesperson for the Cancer Alliance (CA) no information is available regarding the outcome of a critical oncology tender issued in 2023 by the Gauteng Department of Health – *Daily Maverick* (26 Jan 2024). A spokesperson for the CA said: "Many oncology service providers could not attend a mandatory briefing session due to communication issues. As a result, they were excluded from tender applications." Although R784m was allocated to the department to address the surgical and radiation

Critical issues with CT scanners at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital have resulted in delayed treatment, inadequate care, and even patient deaths. – **Daily**

scanners.

functioning CT



PHARMACEUTICAL NEWS

This was attributed to Clicks' increased sales during the festive season.

annually lose their lives to snakebites, due to the limited availability of antivenom. To address this problem the World Health Organisation (WHO) adopted a more targeted approach to antivenoms. The new guidelines focus on four categories of antivenoms, including the broad-spectrum variety. The region's primary antivenom producer is South African Vaccine Producers,

Bloomberg reported on 24 January that up to 32 000 people in sub-Saharan Africa

brain chip in human Reuters reported on 30 January that the brain-chip startup Neuralink, founded by Elon Musk, has successfully implanted its first human patient with its

The implant, called 'Telepathy', aims to enable individuals to control computer cursors or keyboards using their thoughts. "The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted clearance for Neuralink to conduct this human trial, a significant milestone for the company's efforts to assist patients with

is spearheading a new vaccinate 250,000 children scientific research initiative vaccination campaign to on the African continent to over the next two years, "safeguard more than 2m develop an HIV/AIDS reported **Associated Press** individuals". vaccine, reported *Mail* & (30 Jan 2024). Snce the first outbreak in **Guardian** (24 Jan 2024). The project will be February 2023, cholera has

supported by the Gavi

also assisting 20 other

"Africa witnesses about

600,000 deaths, primarily

250m malaria cases

annually, resulting in

among young children.

African countries.

Vaccines Alliance, which is

President's Emergency Plan Cameroon will use the for AIDS Relief." Mosquirix malaria vaccine, endorsed by the World Health Organisation." **NEWS FROM MEDICAL SCHEMES**

"Alternative models that would allow the improvement of public health facilities with combined public and private funding and proposals of partnerships to improve the quality of the public health system while reducing costs to those with medical scheme membership have been discussed."

tariff ceiling should be implemented as it might limit competitiveness in the market and pose challenges for universal health coverage (NHI). Strachan is sceptical about the impact of NHI on medical schemes, suggesting that it may not significantly affect them for at least two decades. He believes the current system needs to better represent and compensate teamwork within multidisciplinary healthcare teams.

As a result, the healthcare insurance industry is struggling to manage rising costs.

Dr Simon Strachan, CEO of the South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF), expressed concerns about the Health Market Inquiry's recommendation that a regulated

CMS in January 2024 Circular 1 of 2024:

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