

## Dear Valued Practitioner

The HPCSA and CMS have sent out communication applicable to healthcare professionals with regard to COVID-19. We have decided to summarise the key points for ease of reference. For more information click on the following links:

- <https://www.hpcsa.co.za/?contentId=510&actionName=Events>
- <https://www.medicalschemes.com/files/Circulars/Circular25Of2020.pdf>

*Kind regards*

## Focus on Health team

### HPCSA developments with regards to nationwide lockdown

- Services that will continue during the lockdown period are as follows:
  - Annual Renewals can be accessed through the online platform from the HPCSA website up to payment stage.
  - New Applications can be lodged by submitting the required documentation via email to [registrationgroup@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:registrationgroup@hpcsa.co.za). The new registration will be valid for a limited period from the date of registration to 31 March 2021.

### COVID-19: HPCSA Healthcare Practitioner Guidelines

- Except in emergency situations, practitioners should perform professional acts for which they are adequately educated, trained and sufficiently experienced.
- From the moment COVID-19 is suspected, the Person Under Investigation (PUI) should be isolated, and infection control measures immediately instituted. Only PUI for suspected COVID-19 should be tested.
- Healthcare practitioners confirmed or suspected of occupational exposure to COVID-19 should refer to the NICD guidelines for COVID-19.
- Lists of healthcare workers with occupation exposure should be compiled by the respective health facilities.
- Practitioners with exposure should be actively monitored for symptoms and rapidly isolated and tested should they develop symptoms.
- Should PPE not become immediately available, information on what to do may be sought from the NICD's clinical guidance on COVID-19.

- Quarantine may be applied at an individual patient level or at the level of a group or community of exposed persons.
- Practitioners are expected to continue updating their professional knowledge and skills in order to effectively manage patients in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other health conditions of public health importance.
- Refer to NICD FAQ when attending to queries from the public.

#### Guidance on the application of Telemedicine Guidelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Telehealth is only permissible in circumstances where there is an already established practitioner-patient relationship, except where Telepsychology is involved, in which case telehealth is permissible even without an established practitioner-patient relationship.
- Practitioners may charge a fee for services rendered through a telehealth platform.

#### CMS COVID-19 Circular

- All cases of COVID 19 are regarded as Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMB) condition and should be funded in full in line with the current NICD guidelines as published.
- The CMS requests that schemes investigate all disruptions to member contributions on a case by case basis and determine the merits thereof, prior to termination.
- The CMS supports price and tariff negotiations between key players aimed at improving access to care, prevention of exploitation of patients and cost reduction in the health sector.
- The CMS, Medical schemes and related entities will be regarded as support to essential services and therefore need to operate specified functions during the lockdown.