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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

DIRECTIVE ON COMPENSATION FOR WORKPLACE ACQUIRED COVID-19

This new directive, which is already in effect, provide employers and medical service providers with the stipulate prescripts when submitting claims and supporting medical reports for COVID-19. These reports submitted through CompEasy or Mutual Association claims system, require the medical service provider to use the emergency COVID-19 ICD-10 code: U07.1.

The directive deals with workplace-acquired COVID-19 resulting from work-related exposure, exposure to suspected or confirmed cases(s) of COVID-19 in the workplace; or while travelling on an official trip to high-risk countries or areas on work assignment or while performing any duty in pursuance of the employer's business.

Download the Directive [here](#).

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DIRECTION AMENDMENT ON DETERMINATION OF EXTENSION FOR VALIDITY PERIOD OF LEARNER'S LICENCES. DRIVING LICENCE CARDS.

All learner's licences, driving licence cards, temporary driving licences and professional driving permits that expire during the period that commenced from 26 March 2020 up to and including 31 August 2020 are deemed to be valid and their validity period is extended for a further grace period ending on 31 January 2021.

All motor vehicle licence discs, temporary permits and roadworthy certificates that expired during the period that commenced from 26 March 2020 up to and including 31 May 2020 are deemed to be valid and their validity period is extended for a further grace period ending on 31 August 2020.

Motor trade number licences that expired during the period that commenced from 26 March 2020 up to and including 31 May 2020 are deemed to be valid and are extended for a further grace period ending on 30 November 2020.

Download the amended Directions [here](#).

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THE LESSONS OF COVID-19 FOR NHI

COVID-19 has taught government valuable lessons in implementing the National Health Insurance. This is according to National Department of Health consultant Dr Nicholas Crisp who was speaking to SAFM's Stephen Grootes on Tuesday morning.

"What we've learnt during COVID-19 is that if we had one system where everyone was part of that system, and it had a logical structure, it would have been a lot easier to address the COVID-19 challenges that we face," Crisp said.

"When we started with COVID-19, [provision of care] was extremely erratic, it was very difficult to coordinate, the data systems didn't talk to one another, it was very difficult to get information into a central point to understand where things were going wrong.

All of that has gotten systematically better using the resources of the National Health Insurance

Listen to the interview [here](#).

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COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

TRACKING THE PANDEMIC



New lockdown rules: Cabinet approves changes to curfew, leisure travel

- Tourism minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane announced on Thursday that cabinet has decided to extend the national curfew to 22:00, from 21:00. This is to accommodate restaurants, which have had to cut their dinner services short under the current curfew.
- Kubayi-Ngubane also said that leisure travel accommodation will be allowed within provinces. Currently, hotels, guest houses and lodges are only allowed to accommodate business travellers. Only two people per room – except for “nuclear families” (parents and their children) – will be allowed. “Let me emphasise, it is only intra-provincial travel, not inter-provincial travel. Individuals are still not permitted to travel between provinces for leisure purposes,” she added.
- Tour operators will also now be allowed to conduct guided tours in “open safari vehicles”, under planned regulations.

Public procurement and allegations of fraud and corruption

Rush to obtain PPE resulted in 'abuse' of procurement systems, Makhura concedes

- Gauteng Premier David Makhura said, while he had anticipated that emergency procurement during the COVID-19 pandemic would be abused, the open tender system fell away when the state of disaster was declared in March.
- Emergency regulations had made way for the province to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) much faster than what the open tender system would allow.
- The premier, speaking to journalists on Thursday during a provincial command council briefing, said he knew emergency procurement could be “abused” - with tenders awarded to those who aren't deserving or did not qualify.

102 companies in Gauteng being probed for COVID-19 looting, says SIU head

- The head of the [Special Investigating Unit](#) (SIU), Advocate Andy Mothibi, on Thursday said that 102 companies were being investigated for corrupt [COVID-19](#) fund tenders in Gauteng province alone. Mothibi said the corruption was widespread and not only limited to Gauteng.
- The dodgy tenders involving emergency purchases of personal protective equipment (PPE) were believed to be valued at R2.2 billion. Mothibi said that the SIU would make sure those found guilty are held accountable.
- The SIU head said that there were standards that government had to follow before awarding the tenders to companies. “Standards that were put in place by the National Treasury once the state of disaster was declared, and we will be making findings per company looking at all those requirements,” he said.
- Mothibi asked the public to trust the SUI to not only get to the bottom of the alleged corruption but also to recover the money. “We would like to demonstrate to the public that we mean business. The public expectation is understandable because they want to see cases being prosecuted, even if we inform them that there are other avenues of civil litigation or disciplinary processes,” he said.

Mboweni: Treasury looking at centralising PPE purchases to prevent corruption

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the COVID-19 crisis was corrupt.

- One of the things we are thinking about is how to centrally purchase some of the equipment that is required, given the capacity issues between ourselves and the national Department of Health."

Western Cape publishes protective equipment procurement report for transparency

- The Western Cape provincial government has published a report detailing all personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement and expenditure in the province, amid a spike in corruption allegations relating to COVID-19 contracts in other provinces.
- Western Cape MEC for finance and economic opportunities, David Maynier, said on Thursday the first procurement disclosure report details all PPE procurement and expenditure by the Western Cape government departments from April 1 to June 30. Each transaction included details such as the name of the supplier, a description of the item, the unit price per item and the total spent. An automated report will be made available on a monthly basis, he said.

CLINICAL, SCIENTIFIC

Majority of COVID-19 related deaths in Gauteng suffered from hypertension or diabetes

- As of 29 July, Gauteng recorded a total of 1 836 COVID-19 related deaths; the majority of the deceased had suffered from either or both diabetes and hypertension. According to a death analysis by the provincial command council, diabetes and hypertension remained the most common comorbidities in people on record as dying of COVID-19.
- A total of 1 028 (57%) of the deceased suffered from either diabetes or hypertension or both.
- A further breakdown of the most common comorbidities showed that:
 - 438 (24%) of the deceased suffered from hypertension
 - 249 (14%) of the deceased suffered from diabetes
 - 341 (19%) suffered from both hypertension and diabetes
- Other recorded comorbidities included chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which 58 (3%) of the deceased suffered from, and 82 (4%) suffered from renovascular disease (RVD).
- A total of 432 (23%) of the deceased either had no or unknown comorbidities, while 236 (13%) of the deceased were listed as having other unnamed commodities.
- Of the 1 836 deaths, 1 003 (55%) were male and 833 (45%) female.
- A total of 1 207 or 66% of the deceased were between the ages of 50 and 79, with 691 being male. The second most affected age group is the 40-49, in which 203 (11%) deaths were recorded, and 80-89, where 195 (10.6%) deaths were recorded, as of 29 July. A total of 1 062 of the deceased were older than 60, while 774 were under 60 years of age.

COVID-19: Preliminary study indicates that HIV and TB have a modest effect on mortality in SA

- Preliminary results from a study of 12 987 COVID-19 patients in South Africa indicate that HIV and TB have a modest effect on mortality, lead scientists Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Professor Salim Abdool Karim said. "The biological and epidemiological interaction of COVID-19, HIV and TB is not well understood," they said.
- Patients immunocompromised by HIV or with TB lung disease could be more susceptible to severe COVID-19. However, preliminary results from a study of 12 987 COVID-19 patients in South Africa indicate that HIV and TB have a modest effect on COVID-19 mortality".

Sputum testing detected the RNA of the virus

- Sputum testing shows significantly higher rates than oropharyngeal swab testing. The current gold standard, found a systematic review and meta-analysis from **Brigham and Women's Hospital**.
- Early and accurate detection is critical for preventing the spread of **COVID-19** and providing appropriate care for patients. Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs, which require inserting a long shaft into the nasal cavity to collect a sample from the back of the nose and throat, are currently the gold standard for collecting a specimen for diagnosis. But the procedure is technically challenging, often uncomfortable for patients and requires personal protective equipment that may be in short supply. Other approaches to collecting specimens — including from an oropharyngeal swab and sputum — have been tested in small studies, but there is uncertainty about which method is best for detecting the virus.
- Our study shows that sputum testing resulted in significantly higher rates of SARS-CoV-2 detection and supports the use of this type of testing as a valuable method for the diagnosis and monitoring of COVID-19 patients."

ECONOMICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL

Informal traders in Cape Town will receive toolkits to help them trade safely amid COVID-19

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toolkit to those registered on its database in possession of COVID-19 permits and concession letters.

- The kit consists of three litres of hand sanitiser, a "social distancing mat" to remind customers to keep 1.5m from traders, two cloth masks, a toolkit bag, a beanie and an information pack on how to operate safely.

The United States and Brazil account for close to 40% of all coronavirus cases worldwide.

- Despite making up only around 7% of the overall world population, the United States and Brazil account for close to 40% of all coronavirus cases worldwide.
- The United States has a population of 331,002,651, or a little more than 4% of the overall world population, but accounts for 4,401,599 COVID-19 cases as of Wednesday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. The country leads the world in the number of cases and deaths, which have now surpassed 150,000.
- Brazil has a population of 212,682,722, or a little under 3% of the overall world population, but the nation is the second leading country in terms of the number of coronavirus cases with 2,483,191 infections so far. A total of 88,539 deaths have been recorded in Brazil. Overall, 1.3% of the US and 1.2% of Brazil's population have been infected with the coronavirus.

OTHER

Is video chat a sufficient proxy for face-to-face interaction?

The Evolution Institute - a [non-profit](#) think tank based in [San Antonio, Florida](#)

- Past research, including biosocial research, wouldn't have given us much reason to expect otherwise. Video-mediated communication is far more complex than most people realize, and perceptions of its effectiveness are dependent on a host of factors. Modern platforms tend to focus on interactants' faces, which *should* facilitate the communication of personal messages; however, video chat doesn't seem to live up to the richness of face-to-face interaction.
- In comparison to face-to-face interaction, video-mediated interaction generates less positive feelings and less cohesion among users. This may help explain why, despite the widespread availability and use of video chat and conferencing technology during COVID-19, people became increasingly desperate for face-to-face contact as cabin fever from social distancing set in. The reasons why face-to-face interaction is important:
 - Humans have evolved a unique ability to step outside themselves, take themselves as objects, and imagine *in advance* how other people might respond to different courses of action. This ability, referred to as "**role-taking**," is a fundamental organizing force in group life.
 - The concept of role-taking is nuanced (beyond facial expressions) and is based on shared meanings, shared expectations, and the context of interaction. [Role-taking overlaps with "theory of mind" in neuroscience, which refers to our ability to infer and reason about others' states of mind. We see role-taking as a specific function of the capacity for theory of mind.](#)
 - Past research gives us reason to believe that the ability to engage in theory of mind reasoning, generally, and role-taking, more specifically, is supported by the human "mirror neuron" system (hMNS). **Mirror neurons** are present in several brain regions, and they become active both when a person engages in a specific behaviour as well as when they see someone else engage in the same behaviour.

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