



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NOTICE: RATIONAL MEDICINE USE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In December 2019, in China, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was confirmed as the causative virus of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The situation has now escalated to a pandemic where more than 305 000 people have been infected globally. This led to President Ramaphosa declaring a National State of Disaster in South Africa on the 15th of March 2020.

Due to this pandemic, there is now increased global demand on pharmaceuticals and decreased active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) production. It is anticipated that supply constraints may result. The National Department of Health (NDoH) is therefore making an urgent plea to all health care workers to take the following measures to promote rational medicine use:

1. For treatment of symptoms and secondary infections and complications, adherence to the recommendations of the National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC) as stated in the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML) for the treatment of symptoms and secondary infections and complications. The STGs and EML can be accessed via a mobile application called "EML Clinical Guidelines" or using the URL provided: <http://www.health.gov.za/index.php/standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list>
2. Careful monitoring of stock of both medicines and infection prevention and control (IPC) items must be applied to minimise the possibility of stock outs.

Recommendations

1. All relevant stakeholders including professional and clinical societies are requested to closely monitor the use of essential medicines and IPC items. Following which, urgent interventions be implemented to address any irrational use identified.
2. Provinces, districts and health establishments, both public and private, are requested to urgently distribute and communicate this information widely.

Kind regards

DR T PILLAY
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH

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