



3 March 2021

Dear MHR Panel Member

### **COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE**

MHR is pleased to confirm that, as part of the national COVID-19 **trial** vaccine roll-out that begun on Wednesday, 17 February 2021, MHR panel members will also be included in this Sisonke trial programme. Over the next few weeks, those choosing to be vaccinated will receive the vaccine, along with a vaccination passport.

The South African government has secured half a million doses of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine as part of the initial trial programme and 30% of these doses has been allocated to the private sector (including agency staff) as a whole. As healthcare workers are the priority vaccination group, we'd like to take the opportunity to remind you of the process in order ensure that you are included in phase 1 of the vaccination trial. After the successful completion of the trial the national roll-out will commence and those of you who do not get the opportunity to get vaccinated during the trial will then be vaccinated.

The National Department of Health has informed us that the focus for the next two weeks of the roll-out will remain strictly on hospitals' healthcare workers operating within the high risk areas of

hospital and who are patient facing. At each vaccine site, the facilities will first vaccinate their own healthcare workers, then those of institutions identified by the Department in their catchment areas based on the risk stratification below:

1. **Very high risk patient facing** i.e. EMS, Emergency Centres, ICUs/Critical care/High care and COVID wards, supporting staff in these units (e.g. pathology, radiology, dialysis, etc.)
2. **High risk patient facing** i.e. all other specialities, doctors and nurses not covered in 1 above and allied professionals (excluding physiotherapists already included in 1 above), administrative staff in clinical patient facing areas i.e. reception and ward personal assistants
3. **Lower risk patient facing** i.e. psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation and step down facilities, occupational health medical practitioners
4. **Administrative staff in clinical but non-patient facing areas** i.e. financial management in hospitals
5. **Administrative staff in non-clinical non-patient facing areas** i.e. regional / corporate office

*This depends on local vaccine availability and access to Sisonke vouchers. Non patient facing health care workers should not be vaccinated in the next few weeks, unless the vaccines will be wasted (to be managed at a local level).*

We recognise that this is a process, and that not all of those staff wanting to receive the vaccine have had the opportunity to do so yet. We also recognise that the roll-out has undergone some adjustments in the process as lessons have been learnt. The introduction of the risk stratification was an essential step in ensuring a controlled, equitable distribution to all healthcare workers.

The next phase of the roll-out includes vaccination points at some of the private hospitals across the country, including some of our hospitals. However, the prioritisation of the vaccines remains key to the process.

It has been confirmed for week 3 and 4 phase of the roll-out, healthcare workers in those areas in the following hospitals will be included (it will expand later to other facilities):

- Mediclinic Welkom (to be vaccinated at Bongani Hospital)
- Mediclinic Panorama (to be vaccinated at Melomed Gatesville Medical Centre)
- Mediclinic Louis Leipoldt (to be vaccinated at Melomed Gatesville Medical Centre)
- Mediclinic Newcastle (to be vaccinated at Madadeni Hospital)
- Mediclinic Worcester (to be vaccinated at Worcester Provincial Hospital)
- Mediclinic Ermelo (to be vaccinated at Ermelo Provincial Hospital)
- Mediclinic Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre (to be vaccinated at Netcare Milpark)
- Mediclinic Paarl (to be vaccinated at Paarl Provincial Hospital)
- Mediclinic Bloemfontein (to be vaccinated at Life Rosepark Hospital)
- Mediclinic Nelspruit (To vaccinate Mediclinic staff as well as Kiaat Private Hospital and Lowveld Hospital)
- Mediclinic Upington (To vaccinate Mediclinic staff as well as Dr Harry Surtie Hospital)
- Mediclinic George and Geneva (to be vaccinated at George Provincial Hospital)
- Mediclinic Limpopo (To vaccinate Mediclinic staff as well as other private health care workers)

Healthcare workers who are working within these risk stratified units and who still wish to be vaccinated must verify their details by logging on the EVDS system (<https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/>), irrespective of whether they have done this before. It is

especially important to ensure that cellular phone numbers are correct. Where vaccination centres have been designated, they should schedule an available appointment at the facility using the EVDS scheduling system. Please note that the EVDS has introduced full audits, which can track the credibility of the information provided by the staff member.

Once you arrive for your appointment, you will need to present your voucher code (received by SMS) at the vaccination site, an approved form of identification i.e. original ID document, valid driver's licence, passport or affidavit as well as a letter of employment or staff card. Please note that only those who have received a voucher code and can display it and verify their identity will be allowed to enter the vaccination centre.

Mediclinic along with MHR continues to push for further expansion of vaccination sites as part of our ongoing engagement with the Department of Health. We are committed to supporting every area of the roll-out through the provision of vaccinators, administrators and other expertise as a demonstration of our commitment to this programme. Mediclinic and MHR will continue to represent the needs of all healthcare workers within our hospitals throughout this process. We recognise that there might be discrepancies between the practical roll-out on a provincial level and the national directives but understand that this is in order to adjust to circumstances on a local level.

We understand that there are many healthcare workers who do not fall within these units and who still wish to be vaccinated. We are confident that as the roll-out continues, you will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine. The roll-out is expected to last several more weeks, as the Department of Health focuses on equitable access to the vaccine.

With this in mind, we ask you to continue to encourage and support your colleagues to register on the EVDS system for the vaccine, as this is the best opportunity we have to protect our community, our families and ourselves. We will continue to actively engage with both national and provincial health departments on behalf of our staff as well as all other healthcare workers in our facilities, as adjustments are made to the process. The vaccination trial is expected to continue for a number of weeks and additional hospitals and categories will be reached.

Kind regards



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