



Reference: COVID-19 Updates
Tel: 012 431 0500
E-mail: info@medicalschemes.com
Date: 19 March 2020

Circular 24 of 2020: COVID-19 Update

Dear Stakeholder,

The Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) has taken into account the recent [pronouncements](#) by President Cyril Ramaphosa, on measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Amongst the measures, physical contact is discouraged and gatherings with more than 100 people are prohibited.

We echo the President's call for everyone to:

- Wash their hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitisers for at least 20 seconds;
- Cover their nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow;
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.

As the regulator of the private healthcare industry, we take the safety and health of our beneficiaries and stakeholders seriously. As such, amidst the emerging and rapidly evolving pandemic, we urge all our stakeholders to follow best practice protocols as put forth by the Department of Health (DOH), and the World Health Organization (WHO) in operating their business.

To this extent, the CMS wishes to inform all stakeholders of the following arrangements, where statutory and regulatory responsibilities are concerned:

1. Fraud, Waste and Abuse Summit

CMS' Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA) Summit, which was due to take place on 2-3 April 2020 at the Durban ICC has been postponed to a date to be confirmed in October 2020.

The CMS is committed to containing the spread of the virus as much as possible, and will continue to monitor the feasibility of this date as things progress. In addition, the work on the industry Codes of Good Practice and the FWA tribunal will continue in earnest.

2. The launch of the Section 59 Investigation Report

The release of the draft Section 59 Investigation Report, which was due to take place at the FWA Summit, will continue on 3 April 2020 and will be sent to individual respondents, and published on the investigation's website www.cmsinvestigation.org.za.

Stakeholders will be given a period within which to provide comments and thereafter the Panel will consider the comments and make amendments to the report, where necessary.

The final report launch date will be confirmed in due course. In the quest to limit contact, the proceedings will be live streamed on the investigation's website, www.cmsinvestigation.org.za and CMS' [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) platforms.

3. Annual General Meetings, Special General Meetings and Trustee Elections

The CMS is enjoined to protect the interests of the beneficiaries at all times. A big part of this is the compliance monitoring of Annual General Meetings, Special General Meetings and Trustee Elections of medical schemes.

Where medical schemes are of the view that continuing with their annual meetings will expose beneficiaries to the coronavirus, we encourage them to make use of our exemption application process to postpone the meeting until such time that the impact of the pandemic has been brought under control. All application for exemptions should be submitted to the Office on or before 30 April 2020. A Circular on this can be found [here](#).

4. Broker and Trustee Training, Principal Officer Forums and Roadshows

There will be no Broker and Trustee Training, Principal Officer Forums and Road shows until the outbreak abates. Where roadshow visits to Medical Schemes, Administrators and related entities were scheduled, the CMS will request a cancellation.

5. CMS Offices

In responding to this common threat, the CMS has taken the decision to allow some employees to work remotely from home, in the quest to minimise the physical contact risk. As such, the office will operate with skeleton staff, however all CMS telephones have been rerouted to staff cell phones.

Meetings are discouraged. The CMS has invested in video and telephone conferencing in boardrooms and all stakeholders are encouraged to make use of this alternative.

Where physical meetings are absolutely necessary, the CMS has set up precautionary measures for visitors of the building. At all points of entry, hand sanitising (with 60% alcohol based sanitiser) will be mandatory. A register, with all relevant contact details will be kept. Staff whose jobs are to interface and receive guest will also be provided with gloves.

Walk-ins are discouraged and complainants will be requested to rather use the complaints email complaints@medicalschemes.com. A poster in this regard will be placed at the main entrance.

Deliveries will be treated with the same feat, and may, where possible request drivers to leave their goods outside of the building to reduce contact. A poster in this regard will be placed at the main entrance.

Furthermore, the CMS has encouraged staff who present flu-like symptoms, not to come into the office, but rather to contact their doctor as soon as possible. Where CMS staff present symptoms of COVID-19 at work, they will be kept in a sick room, monitored by CMS Clinicians, until they are transferred safely to a health facility.

The CMS issued a CMScript Newsletter on the coronavirus. Find it [here](#). The CMS also issued a press release around the funding of COVID-19 [here](#). For help and information, contact the Coronavirus Helpline on 0800 29999 or visit www.sacoronavirus.co.za.

Finally, the CMS wishes to stress the importance of adhering to hand sanitising, good hygiene practices and social distancing. In the words of the President, if we act together, if we act now, and if we act decisively, we will overcome it.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Siphon Kabane
Chief Executive & Registrar
Council for Medical Schemes