



13 April 2021

Dear Colleague

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS UPDATE – SISONKE TRIAL AND BEYOND

We are very encouraged by the interest and willingness of staff to participate in this process. As of 12 April, more than 288 000 vaccinations have been received by staff and other healthcare workers across South Africa, with the assistance of 51 different vaccination sites. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work together with other entities to vaccinate as many healthcare workers as possible.

We can confirm that as of 12 April, at least 6 860 Mediclinic staff together with 5 388 associated healthcare professionals and outsourced staff have already received their vaccine. This number is sourced and updated weekly via data obtained through the access control app. We encourage all staff to ensure that their status is up to date on the app, to provide an accurate reflection of our numbers. Once a staff member has indicated that they have been vaccinated, the system will record this response and the question will not be repeated.

To date, 260 vaccinators have been trained along with 68 administrators, including personnel from ER24, INCON and MHR, and this process is being led by the applicable Learning and Development Facilitators. We welcome any other healthcare workers that will be open to receiving training, as these individuals will be key in the roll out of phases 2 and 3 for the public. Administrator role training is also fairly simple, and we encourage additional staff to be nominated for these roles. We also have 56

pharmacists who underwent the required GCP training to assist with the Sisonke trial. So far, we have provided assistance to vaccination sites where we have access to vaccines.

The last doses of the Sisonke Programme are expected to be delivered this week, providing 200 000 more vaccines for healthcare workers, both public and private. When the programme is complete, 500 000 healthcare workers will have been covered by this trial. We would like to thank all parties who have worked together to make this a reality.

Mediclinic is now working on finalising arrangements to vaccinate all staff and affiliated healthcare workers not covered by the Sisonke trial within the next few months. We are awaiting clarity on when vaccines and other processes will be in place from the NDoH, but we assure you that our priority is on ensuring that each staff member and affiliated healthcare workers who wishes to be vaccinated receives this opportunity. At this point, the indicated target date for completion of healthcare workers is middle May. We will communicate more in this regard as we learn more.

Our team received a few encouraging thoughts from the staff and I thought I would share one or two. We recognise that these vaccinations are an emotive topic, and we encourage our staff to feel comfortable in sharing their experiences – empowering your community to protect themselves.

“When I got to Paarl hospital to receive my vaccination, I was very nervous, but once I received it, I was excited because I was doing something to protect everyone I’ll come into contact with in the future. Let’s protect ourselves to protect our patients.”

ENA Janelle Jacobs, Mediclinic Paarl Surgical Unit

I was determined to receive my jab and was comforted by the pre-counselling that I received at the vaccination centre. To my joy I had no severe reactions after vaccination. I would encourage my colleagues who haven’t been inoculated to get the vaccine because this is a way of protecting yourself and in turn protecting your colleagues and most importantly your patients.”

PN Sihle Dhlalisa, Mediclinic Midstream General ICU

In quarter 2 (April - June), we expect the pace of vaccinations to pick up with the predicted addition of other vaccines to the vaccination range. Current schedule of vaccination locations will be communicated at a local level by via the hospital general manager.

There have been some questions regarding receiving the flu vaccine in conjunction with the COVID-19 vaccine. It is **not** recommended that you are given the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine *on the same day* and the minimum amount of time recommended between the two vaccines is 14 days. We would like to encourage you to schedule your flu vaccine before or after your COVID vaccine, as long as you wait those 14 days.

Frontline healthcare workers that are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1a of the roll-out should receive this vaccine as soon as possible, and then receive the flu shot at least 14 days after. If you are in a later phase of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, we recommend that you get your flu shot as soon as it is available, then your COVID-19 vaccine once available.

Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, however flu vaccination has many other important benefits. Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalisation and death. Getting a flu vaccine this winter will be more important than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu but also to help conserve potentially scarce healthcare resources.

Mediclinic understands that many of our staff are eager to proceed with vaccination, and that at times the dynamic nature of the process may cause uncertainty. As such we will ensure that we communicate the relevant information as soon as we receive further details of the roll-out. It is important to note that this process is chiefly limited by the supply of vaccines, which is the biggest constraint.

Please continue to encourage colleagues and those around you to register for the vaccination roll-out. This is our best shot at overcoming the current pandemic.

Kind regards

Dr Gerrit de Villiers

Chief Clinical Officer

Mediclinic Southern Africa