

BOARD NOTICES / RAADSKENNISGEWINGS

**EXTRAORDINARY AHPCSA POLICY DECISION
(TO BE PROMULGATED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE PRESENTLY
AS AN AHPCSA BOARD NOTICE)**



ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

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29 APRIL 2020

**STATE OF DISASTER: COVID19 PANDEMIC: AHPCSA EXCO DIRECTIVE
OPERATING DURING GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED LOCKDOWN**

Ref no. 2 - 29April2020

The Executive Committee of the Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa (“the AHPCSA Exco”), after due consideration, in light of the South African State of Disaster and as a result of the magnitude and severity of the Covid-19 outbreak which has been declared a global pandemic, taking into account sections 1(2)(a), 3, 4, and 9 of the Allied Health Professions Act, Act No 63 of 1982 (“the Act”), read together Regulations No R 127 of 12 February 2001 and the Code of Ethics in terms of Section 54(9) of the Regulations No. R.127 of 12 February 2001 to the Allied Health Professions Act, Act 63 of 1982, as amended (“the Code of Ethics”), hereby issues the following directive regarding the exercise of any professional function by any AHPCSA-registered practitioners and therapists during lockdown Alert Level 4, or lower, as determined by the South African Government.

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The AHPCSA Exco directive dated 26 March 2020 (Ref no. 1 – 26March2020) has reference and is repealed effective as from **1 May 2020** with the issuance of this Board Notice directive, dated 29 April 2020 in order to achieve the objectives of the Act (being inter alia to *assist in the promotion and protection of the health of the public* during the State of Disaster declared by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 15 March 2020, subsequently declared a Level 4 Alert Level by President Ramaphosa on 23 April 2020 with effect from 1 May 2020) and the following revised AHPCSA Exco directive shall apply during the State of Disaster period of lockdown or partial lockdown of Level 4 Alert Level or lower and/or until a further directive is issued by the AHPCSA or the AHPCSA Exco:

1. LEGAL ASPECTS OF LOCKDOWN AND AMENDED ALERT LEVELS

The purpose of the lockdown and/or partial lockdown is to **enforce isolation** to prevent the spread of the virus further throughout the South African population and to gradually open up businesses, however with the minimum risk of spreading the virus. As per the directive and protocol of the South African Government, Level 4 Alert Level means that some activity may be allowed to resume subject to **extreme precautions required to limit community transmission and outbreaks**. President Ramaphosa emphasised that during this period (Level 4 Alert Level), the public is encouraged to stay at home, other than for essential personal movement, doing essential work and work in sectors that **are under controlled opening**.

Pursuant to the South African Government Level 4 Alert Level notification, any AHPCSA-registered practitioner or therapist is allowed to receive patients, but **only** at his/her registered private practice (as per the records of the AHPCSA) as from **1 May 2020** and until further notice from the South African Government and/or the AHPCSA or the AHPCSA Exco.

Any visit to a patient's private residence is **not** permitted, save in **emergency circumstances only and only if prescribed personal protective equipment ("PPE") is utilised and worn and there is adherence to an appropriate hygiene protocol**. Apart from the appropriate record-keeping on a patient's file in such a case, an **additional separate register of visits** to any patient's private residence for emergency visits, containing all salient information, shall be kept for all such cases by any practitioner or therapist carrying out such a home visit for emergency purposes and shall be made available to the AHPCSA on request.

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During this Level 4 Alert Level or any lower lockdown level, all AHPCSA-registered practitioners and therapists are required to adhere to and comply with the directives and/or protocols for good practice hygiene as stipulated by the AHPCSA'S **Board Notice and Guidelines for Good Practice Hygiene** as published on the AHPCSA website on 28 April 2020 (or as subsequently amended), and further, to ensure the safety of any patient, by also conforming with any requisite safety directive and protocol which may be issued by the Minister of Health, the National and Provincial Departments of Health or any other appropriate South African healthcare authority or by the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (www.nicd.ac.za); in the event that such safety directives or protocols supersede any AHPCSA directive and/or protocols, then adherence to such healthcare authority safety directives or protocols is required at all times.

AHPCSA-registered practitioners and therapists are, notwithstanding the allowance to re-open practices or healthcare establishments, advised to rather make use of telehealth/telemedicine according to the Guidelines and Board Notice published on the AHPCSA website on 25 March 2020, where at all possible and especially for patients over sixty (60) years of age and other high-risk populations. In all circumstances the practitioner or therapist should perform appropriate triage and a risk-benefit analysis for each patient before deciding on the appropriate course of action.

As a result of the gradual upliftment of lockdown and strict directives and protocols issued by the South African Government, all AHPCSA-registered practitioners and therapists will still be required to have their permit, registration certificate and ID with them at all times when performing an essential service.

2. PERMIT TO PERFORM ESSENTIAL SERVICE

The above-mentioned permit is issued to you in your **individual capacity** as a practitioner or therapist for the purposes of performing an essential service. This permit:

- permits you to conduct your practice only as per the Act, concomitant Regulations, all applicable Board Notices and Guidelines, the Code of Ethics

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and the AHPCSA'S Board Notice and Guidelines for Good Practice Hygiene as published on the AHPCSA website on 28 April 2020 (or as subsequently amended);

- does not permit you to travel to the home of any patient, except for emergency purposes only, and then subject to the keeping of an appropriate register with the entry of all salient details as indicated above, in addition to an appropriate entry on the relevant patient file;
- is not transferable to any member of staff for whatever reason and is practitioner / therapist specific and limited;
- may not be edited, emended or changed in any way or manner whatsoever and is required to be presented to any law enforcement officer as issued by the AHPCSA, together with a copy of your registration certificate and the appropriate identification document; and
- is subject at all times to the Laws of South Africa and prescribed regulations and protocols from time to time by the South African Government and/or decisions or directives of the AHPCSA and/or AHPCSA'S EXCO.

3. NON-COMPLIANCE

Any non-compliance with the above directive shall be regarded as unprofessional conduct and the AHPCSA-registered practitioner or therapist may face disciplinary action in terms of sections 23 to 30 of the Act and may furthermore be liable to possible prosecution by national law-enforcement authorities.



DR LOUIS MULLINDER

REGISTRAR: ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSION COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA