



**CIRCULAR NO: H ...47..... /2023**

**TO: DDG: CHIEF OF OPERATIONS/ CHIEF DIRECTORS/ DIRECTORS  
HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS  
HEAD OF HEALTH: CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
N.B. FOR CIRCULATION TO ALL MEDICAL, PARAMEDICAL, PHARMACEUTICAL AND  
NURSING PERSONNEL**

**PFIZER COMIRNATY® VACCINE UPDATE**

Please refer to the attached circular which provides details regarding the extension of the expiry date of the Pfizer Comirnaty® vaccine which is currently pending.

Until further information is received, vaccination with the Pfizer Covid vaccine must be paused after the 30 April 2023. A vaccination drive should be considered before this date and if necessary, facilities may place urgent orders as arranged with the CMD Helpdesk.

Facilities who have stock of vaccine with an expiry date of 30 March 2023 are requested to destroy this stock and record this as stock expired on SVS. This stock should not be returned to the Cape Medical Depot.

The Cape Medical Depot has stock of the Jansen Covid vaccine.

Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Best regards

**MS K LOWENHERZ**

**DIRECTOR: MEDICINE MANAGEMENT, LABORATORY & BLOOD SERVICES SUPPORT**

**DATE: 13/04/23**



**DIRECTOR GENERAL  
HEALTH  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
PRETORIA**

Private Bag X828, PRETORIA, 0001, Dr AB Xuma Building, 1112 Voortrekker Rd, Pretoria Townlands 351-JR, Pretoria, 0187, Tel (012) 395 8000  
CAPE TOWN  
P.O. Box 3875, CAPE TOWN, 8000, 103 Parliament Towers, Room 615, Plain Street, CAPE TOWN, 8000 Tel (021) 461 2040 Fax (021) 461 6864

**TO:  
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS  
HEADS OF PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES  
DISTRICT AND PHC MANAGERS  
COVID-19 VACCINE PROGRAMME MANAGERS  
COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE MANAGERS**

**EXPIRY DATE OF THE PFIZER COMIRNATY® VACCINE (MRNA COVID-19 VACCINE)**

To date, the Pfizer Comirnaty® vaccine (mRNA COVID-19 vaccine) has received numerous shelf-life extensions, allowing for the continued administration of the vaccine. Pfizer will submit a further request to SAHPRA to extend the shelf-life of the vaccine from 18 to 24 months for Comirnaty® vaccine stored at -70°C. Following SAHPRA approval, the shelf-life of the existing batches will be extended to September and October 2023.

However, because 21-month stability tests are not routine, only a 24-month test can be undertaken. Pfizer is currently performing stability testing for -70°C storage according to the approved stability protocol for the vaccines, which will be completed at the 24-month time point. Submission of the results to SAHPRA is expected to be in June 2023.

As a result, the current expiry dates will need to be adhered to until the 24-month shelf life has been approved. Consequently, the current batch with an April expiry date is the only available vaccine for administration. After 30 April 2023, no further Pfizer vaccine distribution may occur until the shelf-life approval has been received. This will result in an interruption of the supply of the Pfizer vaccine until June or July 2023.

The inconvenience this may cause is understood. The Department will continue working with Pfizer and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the shelf-life extension is received as soon as possible.

**NOTE:** Where the Pfizer Comirnaty® vaccine is currently stored at -70°C, it is imperative that these vaccines continue to be maintained at this temperature until the shelf-life extension has been received. Comirnaty® vaccine stored at any other temperature range should be disposed of once the discard point at that temperature range is reached.

**NOTE:** Supply of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine remains uninterrupted, and vaccination sites are encouraged to offer the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine to eligible recipients.

  
**DR SSS BUTHELEZI**