



**CIRCULAR NO: H.55 /2020**

**TO: THE CHIEF OF OPERATIONS**  
**ALL CHIEF DIRECTORS/ DIRECTORS/ DISTRICT MANAGERS**  
**HEADS: ALL HOSPITALS, COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES, CLINICS**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEALTH: CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**N.B. FOR CIRCULATION TO ALL MEDICAL, PHARMACEUTICAL AND NURSING STAFF.**

**THIS CIRCULAR REPLACES CIRCULAR H08/2020: SUSPENSION OF METHYLPHENIDATE 20MG AND 30MG LONG ACTING FORMULATIONS FROM THE PROVINCIAL CODE LIST**

Methylphenidate 20mg and 30mg long acting formulations are currently listed on the Provincial Code List of the Western Cape Government Health (WCGH) with the following entries:

- *Specialist psychiatrists, neurologists, paediatricians, school doctor initiated.*
  - *For use after trial of the short-acting formulation proved unsuccessful.*
  - *For paediatrics and adolescents less than 21 years old.*

Unfortunately, the price of methylphenidate 20mg capsules, per the new solid dosage contract awarded May 2019 by National Treasury has increased from R110.47 to R168.72 per pack of 30 capsules. The cost of methylphenidate 30mg has similarly increased from R183.98 to R312.13 per pack of 30 capsules. Engagements with the contracted supplier have not yielded any price reductions.

A historical analysis of the pricing across the 3 available strengths for the past 5 contract periods shows a significant price increase for the 20mg and 30mg Long Acting formulations in the two most recent contracts.

	RT289 - 2009	HP09 - 2012	HP09 - 2014	HP09 - 2016	RT289 - 2019
Methylphenidate (short acting) 10mg 30's	R 23.99	R 24.50	R 24.62	R 24.62	R 29.19
Methylphenidate (long acting) 20mg 30's	R 71.63	R 73.16	R 73.16	R 110.47	R 168.72
Methylphenidate (long acting) 30mg 30's	R 107.45	R 109.75	R 109.75	R 183.98	R 312.13

Methylphenidate 20mg and 30mg Long Acting formulations are not listed on the Essential Medicine List. These formulations were coded in the Western Cape when prices were comparable with the short acting 10mg formulation.

Due to the significant increase in the cost of long acting methylphenidate 20mg and 30mg capsules, the Provincial Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee (PPTC) suspended these formulations from its code list in November 2019, thereby aligning the code list to the Essential Medicines List which only lists the short acting 10mg formulation.

Subsequently, several requests were received by the PPTC to review this decision. After due consideration by the committee in February 2020, the PPTC committee noted that although there is no evidence in support of clinical benefit of the long acting over the short acting, in practice, a number of children will not receive their second dose at school, thereby potentially compromising their care. Methylphenidate 20mg and 30mg long acting will therefore remain on provincial code. The prices and related cost implications will be reviewed in 2021 when a new pharmaceutical contract for solid dosage forms is due for award.

In light of the enormous price increases and the cost variance between the long acting and short acting preparations, it is requested that prescribers review all prescriptions of the long acting preparations. Clinicians should consider prescribing methylphenidate 10mg tablets short acting formulation for patients in whom care will not be compromised by this choice e.g. where there are systems in place for a second dose to be given at school.

Sincerely



**K. LOWENHERZ**

**DIRECTOR: PHARMACY SERVICES**

DATE: 22/04/20