Western Cape Government

CD: EMERGENCY & CLINICAL SUPPORT SERVICES
DIRECTORATE: PHARMACY SERVICES
REFERENCE: 18/2/13
ENQUIRIES: N.MIA

CIRCULAR NO: H 150/2020

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.

UPDATE: SUPPLY OF VENLAFAXINE EXTENDED RELEASE AND IMMEDIATE RELEASE FORMULATIONS.

This circular replaces Circular H120/2020

Venlafaxine is currently recommended as third line treatment for major depressive disorders and anxiety associated with depression, as per the Tertiary and Quaternary Essential Medicines List (March 2020). Venlafaxine is coded as *Specialist Psychiatrist Initiated* in the Western Cape.

The current contracted supplier of venlafaxine, Sandoz SA, has advised of prolonged and continued supply challenges with their extended release formulation as a result of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) production being halted. Sandoz SA has sourced venlafaxine from an alternate supplier to continue fulfilling their contractual obligations until May 2021.

Prescribers and pharmacists are advised that the following products **will no longer be available from the CMD**:

- Sandoz Venlafaxine 150mg 28 tablet pack Extended Release formulation
- Sandoz Venlafaxine 75mg 28 tablet pack Extended Release formulation

The formulations listed below are available from the CMD:

ICN	ITEM_DESCRIPTION
3978052	VENLAFAXINE HCL TABLETS 37,5MG; 30'S (**extended release**)
3978095	VENLAFAXINE;75MG TABLETS,60'S (**immediate release**)

Prescribers are advised to evaluate and manage the formulation switch for patients on the once-daily dose of extended release to a therapeutically effective and equivalent total daily dosage of the immediate release formulation divided into 12 hourly doses or as advised in the product package insert.

E.g.:

- 150mg extended release ≈ 75mg immediate release twice daily

As a consequence of supply uncertainty regarding the formulations, pharmacists and prescribers are advised to check the actual product available at their facility in terms of **strength and formulation (i.e. extended or immediate release)** to ensure that patients are managed accordingly.

Pharmacists must counsel patients regarding the prescribed dosage changes and formulations to promote compliance. Patients should be advised to report any side effects and/or adverse events to their prescriber for further clinical intervention which may include dose adjustments.

Ms K. LOWENHERZ

DIRECTOR: PHARMACY SERVICES

DATE: 15/7/20