



Press Release

To: Health Editors and Journalists

Issued by SAHPRA

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## **Statement about the ongoing work of the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority during protest action in the Civitas Building, Pretoria**

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), the country's essential pillar for an effective health service, has developed contingency plans to ensure that its essential services are not disrupted during the ongoing protest action by the employees of National Department of Health (NDOH).

SAHPRA which was established in February 2018 to replace the Medicines Control Council (MCC) as South Africa's regulatory authority, continues with its work to ensure that health products available to the public are safe, effective and of good quality. As the authority transitions from the MCC to SAHPRA, it continues to be housed with the NDoH employees in the Civitas building in Pretoria.

Since April 2018, NDoH employees working in the Civitas building have been embarking on the protest action because of concerns about working conditions in the building. This has indirectly affected the activities of SAHPRA staff and the overall functionality of the regulatory authority. At present the delivery of paper documents to the SAHPRA offices is a challenge.

The Board of SAHPRA shares the concerns of all parties about the Civitas building and supports the NDoH's efforts to address this problem. However, as the health product regulator, SAHPRA has a mandate to ensure the safety, quality and efficacy of medicines available in South Africa. Ensuring ongoing provision of all these services may be lifesaving.

Part of SAHPRA's responsibility is also to issue permits allowing individual seriously ill patients suffering from life-threatening conditions to have access in emergencies to currently unregistered medicines. Special permits are also necessary to allow hospitals to maintain supplies of unregistered medicines required for emergency treatment of critically ill patients. Another aspect of SAHPRA's work, required at all times, is the ability to rapidly respond to safety signals relating to health products that are available either legally or illegally to the public.

To continue with its services to the public, SAHPRA has developed contingency plans to ensure that its essential services are not disrupted during this period of protest action. In the event that there is an urgent submission required for a priority public health need, please telephone the contact numbers below to discuss how your matter could be addressed.

As attempts to resolve the situation at the Civitas offices continue, SAHPRA will evaluate the situation and offer continued guidance to stakeholders. In the medium term, SAHPRA as a Section 3A public entity, will move into new premises appropriate for the efficient functioning of the Authority with state-of-the-art IT systems tailored to the needs of a regulator, and with user-friendly access for the public, industry and its stakeholders.

We encourage the public and industry to contact us in an emergency and with legitimate concerns through the following contacts: Director for Operations and Administration, Ms Estelle Taute - 0795287755 for submissions; Acting Director, Mr Tohlang Sehloho – 0823020222; Manager Section 21 Orthodox medicines; Dr Shyamli Munbodh – 0721344546; Manager-Pharmacovigilance, Ms Florah Matlala – 0833873358; Manager Biological medicines, Mr Khamusi Mutoti – 0713022135; Acting Director S21 Veterinary medicines, Dr Alice Sigobodhla – 0743791178 or Section 21 Orthodox medicines, Ms Adelaide Molatoli - 0637718906.

**For media enquiries contact:**

**SAHPRA's Acting CEO, Ms Portia Nkambule**

**Cell: 078 802 0781**