



NATIONAL ESSENTIAL  
MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE

## NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE BULLETIN

FOR THE MEETING HELD ON THE 4 SEPTEMBER 2025: MEETING OUTCOMES FOR STAKEHOLDER DISSEMINATION

Accessible on the following platform:

National Health Insurance (NHI) Webpage: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>

The following are the latest editions of the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML)

### PRIMARY HEALTHCARE



STGs and EML 2024 - 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

### ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL



STGs and EML 2024 - 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

### PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL



STGs and EML 2023 Edition updated May 2025

### TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY



EML March 2025 Edition


EML Spreadsheet: this is a list of all the medicines found in the STGs and is an automatic download off the EDP website (<https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>):


The consolidated EML Excel® spreadsheet is available for download on this link.





### ACCESS TO THE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST


The following formats of the STGs and EML are accepted by the National Department of Health:

 **National Health Insurance (NHI) webpage** (latest version of the STGs and EML): The STGs and EML can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>. Refer to Annexure A for guidance on how to navigate the webpage and access the relevant documents.

 **Knowledge Hub eLibrary** on the link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/e-library>. All the STGs, EMLs and related technical documents from the 2020-2024 review period have been moved to the NHI webpage on the NDoH website. If there are any historic technical documents you may require, please email the Essential Drugs Programme (EDP) at [SAEDP@health.gov.za](mailto:SAEDP@health.gov.za).

 **EMGuidance mobile application**: To sign up, use the following link: <http://onelink.to/sy896k>. Please note there may be a delay before the updated documents published on the NHI webpage are uploaded onto the EMGuidance platform. During that process, a temporary link to the latest PDF version of each chapter will be inserted into the affected chapters on the EMGuidance platform. Once the upload is complete, the temporary link will be replaced with the new material and a footer indicating the version number.

 **For webinar recordings** aimed at strengthening implementation of the STGs and EML visit: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>

 **EML Spreadsheet**: Updated version now available – Version 1.1. **New**: Antibiotic AWARe categorisation and tab, as well as corrections to the old version 1.0.



### ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, ESSENTIAL DRUGS PROGRAMME CIRCULARS

Circulars developed by the EDP are disseminated to stakeholders and uploaded on the Essential Drugs Programme page on the NHI webpage. These circulars can be accessed on the following links:

NHI webpage: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/> and <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/> (errata). The following circulars were disseminated for the period August 2025 – September 2025:

- ❶ **Notice AMD/17September2025:** Unfractionated Heparin Stock Constraints – 17 September 2025
- ❷ **Notice 2025/08/25/EDP/01:** Completion of the uploading of the latest chapters of the PHC and AHL STGs and EML on the EM Guidance Application – 27 August 2025



**Please email SAEDP ([SAEDP@health.gov.za](mailto:SAEDP@health.gov.za)) if you would like to be added to the mailing list for EDP updates (circulars, chapter updates etc.)**

### EDP WHATSAPP COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

For the latest updates to the EDP, join our WhatsApp channel below:  
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/GEN6bH1rKYVKSJ1bz34Ne9>

OR

Scan the QR code



### OTHER DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST NEMLC BULLETIN

- 📄 The NEMLC Terms of Reference has been updated and is published on the Essential Drugs Programme page, Governance and Policies tab on the STGs and EML page on the NHI webpage or can be found on the following link: [https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NEMLC-Terms-of-Reference\\_v3-8-September-2025.pdf](https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NEMLC-Terms-of-Reference_v3-8-September-2025.pdf)

### CONSOLIDATED ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST FOR ALL LEVELS OF CARE ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

The EML from the latest versions of the STGs and EML has been extracted into an Excel® spreadsheet. The extracted EML is not intended to replace the STGs and EML but should only serve as a guide to which medicines are approved for use in the South African public health sector. For any guidance on how these medicines should be used, the relevant STGs and EML should be consulted. The consolidated **EML Excel®** spreadsheet encompasses the following features: filters by publication, chapter and chapter subsections. Other columns include ICD10 codes, the International Nonproprietary Name, the dose and dosing interval, route of administration, and prescriber. Please review the **'READ FIRST'** tab for further information and disclaimers. This spreadsheet is available for download from the EDP webpage on the National Health Insurance webpage: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>

**THERAPEUTIC INTERCHANGE DATABASE**

The Therapeutic Interchange (TI) database based on the 2019/2020 editions of the PHC and AH STGs and EML has been removed from the webpage as it is being updated to align with the medicine recommendations made during the 2020-2024 NEMLC review cycle and will be uploaded once the updated version is available. For any interim queries on the TI database, kindly contact the EDP on the following email address: [SAEDP@health.gov.za](mailto:SAEDP@health.gov.za).

The TI Policy may still be accessed at the following link: [https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Therapeutic-Interchange-Policy\\_July2021\\_final.pdf](https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Therapeutic-Interchange-Policy_July2021_final.pdf)

**ACCESS TO OTHER EML RELATED PAGES - <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd/>**

**The Master Health Product List (MHPL)** which contains all pharmaceutical products currently awarded on national contracts can be accessed on the Pharmaceutical Tenders and Contracts page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd/>. The document also contains different tabs listing pharmaceutical products not awarded on national contracts and a list of items currently on Provincial Procurement on Quotation (PPQ)

**Section 21 Medicines** refers to unregistered medicines that can be accessed under specific circumstances by obtaining written authorisation from the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA). SAHPRA may provide authority for the bulk sale and use of the unregistered medicine in accordance with the provisions of the Medicines and Related Substances Act 101 of 1965. The use of the unregistered medicine is considered only for emergency situations where the registered essential medicine is not available for an unmet medical need and there is no therapeutic alternative. The management of the Section 21 medicines procured in bulk in the public sector is undertaken by the Affordable Medicines Directorate, National Department of Health (NDoH). The list of medicines currently procured through Section 21 Authorisations can be accessed on the Contract Management Unit (CMU) page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd-cmu/>

**Hot List** refers to a list of all essential medicines on contract where stock availability remains below 90% and where total orders exceed supplier stock on hand and available stock on hand by provinces is less than two months of forecasted demand. The list includes the root cause for the supply challenge and proposed remedial actions for each listed item. The current Hot List can be accessed on the Contract Management Unit (CMU) page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd-cmu/>

The following items were presented to NEMLC in September 2025 for noting:

- **Circular: Unfractionated Heparin Stock Constraints** – The Committee was notified of a possible supply constraint of Unfractionated Heparin (UFH) injection due to SAHPRA imposing an immediate non-compliance regulatory enforcement order to halt all production of UFH by the contracted supplier. In view of the uncertainty around the timeframes for the resumption of production, a circular was developed indicating alternatives for UFH as included in the STGs and EML, refer to **Notice AMD/17September2025**. The circular also provides guidance for provinces to reserve available UFH supply for specific populations where the alternative treatment (Low Molecular Weight Heparin (LMWH) injection and oral rivaroxaban) is not suitable for clinical use. The circular has been disseminated and can be accessed on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>.
- **Erratum: eGFR Monitoring Intervals for Patients on Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate** – During the collation of the 2024 editions of the PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML, an editorial error was noted in the PHC Ch 11: HIV and AIDS (section: 11.4 HIV and Kidney Disease) where the eGFR monitoring intervals for patients on tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) monitoring was inadvertently recommended at months 3, 6, 12 and then 12 monthly instead of at month 3, month 10, and every 12 months thereafter. This error also reflected in the AHL Ch 1: Alimentary Tract, Section 1.2.4.2 Hepatitis B, Chronic (Non-HIV coinfection), refer to **Notice 2025/07/29/EDP/01**. The erratum has been disseminated and can be accessed on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>

### Topic Prioritisation for the 2025 – 2029 Review Cycle

The NEMLC adopts a systematic approach of topic prioritisation and selection of review topics to inform updates to the STGs and EML. Potential topics are identified through several routes. Stakeholders were invited to nominate topics to help inform topic prioritisation for the NEMLC cycle 2025 – 2029, refer to **Notice 2024/12/12/EDP/01**. Topics are organised within broad topic areas (e.g. Endocrine) for further scoping and prioritisation therein. Topic nomination for this cycle is now closed, and only urgent items will be considered for addition to the current work plan. There may be a call for external comment on certain chapters during the cycle to assist with topic prioritisation within a broad topic area, if required. Several broad NEMLC topic areas were approved by NEMLC in June 2025 for scoping and prioritisation. A progress update was provided at the NEMLC meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025 – See table below.

Broad NEMLC Topic Area	Related STG Chapters and EML				Progress
	PHC	AHL	PHL	TQ EML	
Broad Reproductive	X	X	X	X	ERC Evidence Working Groups formed, scoping and prioritisation of topics underway.
Endocrine	X	X	X	X	
Oncology				X	
Respiratory	X	X		X	
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	X	X			Topic review underway
Anaesthetics and drugs for Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and critical care		X	X		
Cardiovascular	X	X			Work pending EDP capacity - estimated start 2026
Emergencies and Trauma	X	X	X		
Eye	X	X		X	
Infectious Diseases	X	X	X		
Palliative Care	X	X	X	X	
Tuberculosis (TB)	X	X	X		

## STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST



### PRIMARY HEALTHCARE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The consolidated Primary Healthcare (8<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2024) STGs and EML is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Primary Healthcare tab or on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Primary-Healthcare-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-8th-Edition-2024.pdf>



### ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The consolidated Adult Hospital Level (6<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2024) STGs and EML, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Adults tab or on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Hospital-Level-Adults-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-6th-Edition-2024.pdf>



### PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The completed Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML, 2023 edition, updated May 2025, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Paediatrics tab or on the following link: [health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Paediatric-STGs-and-EML-2023-Edition-Updated-May-2025.pdf](https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Paediatric-STGs-and-EML-2023-Edition-Updated-May-2025.pdf)

- Errata to the Paediatric STGs and EML 2023 edition have been published and can be accessed on: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>
  - March 2025
  - October 2024
  - July 2024
  - January 2024
  - December 2023
- Presentations from the Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML 2023 edition webinar launch (held in September 2023) can be found on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab at the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>.



### TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY HOSPITAL LEVEL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The Tertiary and Quaternary Hospital Level EML, updated March 2025 is available for download on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Tertiary-and-Quaternary-EM-recommendations-March-2025.pdf>

*Final reviews and supporting technical documents are published on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>*





### WEBINAR SERIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STGS AND EML

- Take note of the advertisements shared *via* the Knowledge Hub mailing list, EDP stakeholder mailing list and through the NDoH Facebook page, for the series of webinars to be held showcasing the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) process applied to the review of the STGs and EML and the updated chapters, medicine reviews and costings that have been published as part of the 2020-2024 review cycle of the PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML.
- Webinar presentations and recordings for the most recent series are available on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab, on the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>

Date	Webinar Title	Link
25 June 2024	<u>Webinar 1:</u> Health Technology Assessment	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/national-department-health-standard-treatment-guidelines-essential-medicines-list-session-1">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/national-department-health-standard-treatment-guidelines-essential-medicines-list-session-1</a>
16 July 2024	<u>Webinar 2:</u> Mental Health Conditions – updates to the STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/mental-health-updates-ndoh-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicine-list">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/mental-health-updates-ndoh-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicine-list</a>
30 July 2024	<u>Webinar 3:</u> Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Family Planning STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/obstetrics-and-gynaecology-and-family-planning-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/obstetrics-and-gynaecology-and-family-planning-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential</a>
13 August 2024	<u>Webinar 4:</u> Adult Critical Care – introduction to new STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/adult-critical-care-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/adult-critical-care-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list</a>
27 August 2024	<u>Webinar 5:</u> Infections STGs and EML, and Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Report	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/infections-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-and-antimicrobial">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/infections-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-and-antimicrobial</a>
17 September 2024	<u>Webinar 6:</u> Emergencies and Injuries and Poisonings – Updates to the STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/emergencies-injuries-and-poisonings-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/emergencies-injuries-and-poisonings-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines</a>
29 October 2024	<u>Webinar 7:</u> HIV and AIDS – Updates to the STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/hiv-and-aids-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/hiv-and-aids-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list</a>
26 November 2024	<u>Webinar 8:</u> Blood and Blood Forming Organs, Haemophilia – Updates to STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/blood-and-blood-forming-organs-and-haemophilia-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/blood-and-blood-forming-organs-and-haemophilia-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential</a>
11 February 2025	<u>Webinar 9:</u> Cardiovascular Conditions – Updates to the STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/cardiovascular-conditions-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/cardiovascular-conditions-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list</a>
08 April 2025	<u>Webinar 10:</u> Rational Medicine Use – Updates to the STGs and EML	<a href="https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/rational-medicine-use-rmu">https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/rational-medicine-use-rmu</a>



Additional webinars to follow during 2025  
Watch this space

**Annexure A: Guide on how to access the Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List and related technical documents on the NHI webpage (<https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>)**

**Click here for all information relating to**

- PHC STGs & EML
- AHL STGs & EML
- Paediatric Hospital level STGs & EML
- Tertiary & Quaternary level EML

**Click here for**

- Circulars
- NEMLC bulletins
- Webinars, Presentations & Campaigns

**Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List (STGs and EML)**

South Africa has committed to "achieve Universal Health Coverage including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all", one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations. Therefore, an Essential Medicines List (EML) with supporting Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) has been developed, for different levels of care.

The respective STGs and EML for primary healthcare and hospital levels (adults and paediatrics), and the EML for tertiary level of care are described below. The STGs and EML satisfies the priority needs of the South African population, provided for by the National Drug Policy of 1996 and is based on the WHO EML concept of evidence-medicine principles of comparative efficacy, safety, and affordability. Developed and maintained by the ministerially appointed National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC), Technical Expert Review Sub-Committees of NEMLC and the Essential Drugs Programme from the Affordable Medicines Directorate of the National Department of Health (NDoH).

The rationale for inclusion or exclusion of a medicine to the EML is described in NEMLC evidence reports, medicine reviews and costing analyses.

The therapeutic interchange database lists therapeutic alternatives for medicines listed on the respective EML.

**Primary Healthcare**    **Hospital Level - Paediatrics**    **Hospital Level - Adults**    **Hospital Level - Tertiary And Quaternary**    **Governance & Policies**

**Click on the relevant tab to access updates to the STGs & EML for each level of care**