

JUNE 2026

NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE BULLETIN

HELD ON THE 04 JUNE 2026: MEETING OUTCOMES FOR STAKEHOLDER DISSEMINATION

Accessible on the following platform:

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

AT A GLANCE

- KEY UPDATES TO THE STGS & EMLS
- RATIFIED GUIDANCE, POLICY UPDATES AND CIRCULARS
- TOPIC PRIORITISATION FOR 2025 – 2029
- WEBINAR UPDATES

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

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE



**STGs and EML
8th Edition
Updated March 2026**

ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL



**STGs and EML
6th Edition
Updated March 2026**

PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL



**STGs and EML
2025-2029 Review Cycle
Updated March 2026**

TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY



**EML
June 2026 Edition**

ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST SPREADSHEET



A list of all the medicines found in the STGs and is an automatic download from the EDP website

<https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Essential-Medicines-List-Version-2.0-29-May-2026.xlsx>

CLICK HERE

CONTACT US

Email: SAEDP@health.gov.za

Stock Queries: stockalert@health.gov.za

Join the EDP WhatsApp Channel for real-time updates -

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/GEN6bH1rKYVKSJ1bz34Ne9>



ACCESS TO THE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

1

National Health Insurance (NHI) Webpage

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



2

Knowledge Hub eLibrary

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.



3

EMGuidance Mobile Application

To sign up, use the following link:

<http://onelink.to/sy896k>. Please note there may be a 6 week 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 revised 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.



4

Webinar Recordings

For webinar recordings aimed at strengthening implementation of the STGs and EML visit:

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>

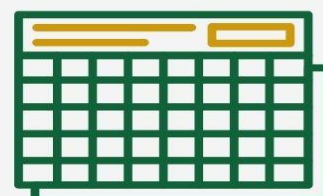


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EML Spreadsheet

Updated version now available – Version 2.0

New: Antibiotic AWaRe categorisation tab, as well as corrections to the old version 1.0.





Access to the NDoH, Essential Drugs Programme Circulars

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

NHI Webpage:

 <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>

The following circulars were disseminated for the period of **June – July 2026**:

-  **Notice AMD03062026:** Amoxicillin, Clavulanic Acid; 600mg/5ml, 42.9mg/5ml; Suspension – 03 June 2026
-  **Notice 2026/06/10/EDP/01:** Publication of the National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC) approved updates to the Primary Healthcare (PHC) and Adult Hospital Level (AHL) Chapters for the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML): 2025 – 2029 Review Cycle – 11 June 2026
-  **Notice 20260622/EDP01:** Recommendations for Restricted Use of Anti-D Immunoglobulin – 24 June 2026
-  **Notice 20260624/EDP01:** Phenobarbital/Phenobarbitone 30 mg tablets – Stock supply shortage and the proposed therapeutic alternatives – 29 June 2026

If you would like to be added to the mailing list for latest EDP updates (circulars, chapter updates etc.) please complete the following form by clicking on the link: [Essential Drugs Programme Mailing List Form](#)



NOTICEBOARD

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 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. Please review the **'READ FIRST'** tab for further information and disclaimers. For insight on the most recent updates to the sheet, kindly review the "VERSION CONTROL" tab. 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** (2019/2020 edition) has been removed from the NDoH webpage as it is being updated to align with the current medicine recommendations and will be uploaded once available. For any interim queries on the TI database, kindly contact the EDP on the following email address: 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

PHC IMPLEMENTATION SLIDES

The PHC implementation slides are a quick tool intended to succinctly summarise the key medicine changes from the recent review cycle of the STGs and EML. The slides may be used as a training tool for staff implementation specifically at the PHC level of care. The slides should be used in conjunction with the NEMLC report, applicable evidence reviews and costing documents published together with the chapter. The information provided on the slides does not supersede or replace the STG itself.

Updated slides published:

PHC Chapter 5 : Skin Conditions

<https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Primary-Healthcare-Chapter-5-Skin-Conditions-Implementation-Slides-2025-9-review-Version-1.0-8-June-2026.pdf>

PHC Chapter 11: HIV and AIDS

<https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Primary-Healthcare-Chapter-11-HIV-and-AIDS-Implementation-Slides-2025-9-review-Version-1.1-4-June-2026.pdf>

PDE5-inhibitors for pulmonary hypertension in adults, and persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (PPHN)

On the latest tablet tender: HP09-2026SD, Sildenafil 50mg scored tablets 4 tablets was awarded for the indications of pulmonary hypertension in adults, and PPHN.

There was extensive consultation with both adult and paediatric pulmonologists for the review of PDE5-inhibitors in these indications. A review of the evidence indicated that sildenafil could be dosed at 20 to 25mg 8 hourly. Although the 20mg product is registered for PPHN and respiratory hypertension, dosing at 25mg 8 hourly is tolerated well and more affordable (done frequently in both paediatric and adult settings in private and public hospitals).

This allows access to therapy for more patients. All PDE5-inhibitors were placed into a therapeutic class to allow for the most affordable one to be awarded.

See links to review documents:

https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/hltagPDE5I_Adults-Review_N_-Aug-2024.pdf

https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/hltagPDE5I_Adults-Review_N_-Aug-2024.pdf



TOPIC PRIORITISATION FOR THE 2025-2029 REVIEW CYCLE

Due to the large volume of potential topics for review, the NEMLC adopts a systematic approach of topic prioritisation and selection of review topics to inform updates to the STGs and EML. There are specific time periods when comments and topic nomination submissions are accepted:

- A call for nomination of topics for review occurs at the beginning of each NEMLC cycle (last call - December 2024 for NEMLC Cycle 2025-2029 – call closed February 2025 – refer to Notice 2024/12/12/EDP/01);
- Calls for external comment may be sent out by NEMLC on specific chapters which have been selected for review during the scoping stage of the review;
- Calls for external comments are disseminated after NEMLC has approved an STG and EML update and reviews for external comment. The call for comment is aimed at obtaining feedback specifically related to the update recommended (e.g. STG chapter or section).

All comments and topic nominations (for STG and medicine reviews) received during call for comment are systematically logged for record purposes. Prioritisation occurs per review cycle and is assessed annually as required. Submission of comments or nomination of topics for STG or medicine review does not automatically guarantee that a topic will be reviewed by the NEMLC within the current review cycle.

To manage capacity, submissions received outside of the call for comment periods will be logged but may only be considered for prioritisation in the next NEMLC review phase commencing in 2029. Topics which may require immediate attention *i.e.* safety issues, are welcomed throughout the review cycle, and if classified as urgent will be fast tracked for review.

Calls for comment, including topic nominations, are circulated through the standard EDP communication channels. Please request to be added at SAEDP@health.gov.za or use this link: [Essential Drugs Programme Mailing List Form](#) if you do not receive these emails. There is also an updated form for submissions, please request this form as the previous medicine motivation form is no longer accepted.

Several broad topic areas were approved by NEMLC in 2025 for further scoping and prioritisation – see *the* NEMLC Bulletin dated, 4 September 2025, and accessible at: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>. Commencing with scoping and prioritisation of review questions within the broad topic areas is dependent on capacity. Technical work is currently underway on the following Topic Areas through the respective ERC Evidence Working Groups:

- **Endocrine** (Scoping document approved October 2025),
- **Oncology** (Scoping document approved October 2025),
- **Respiratory** (Scoping document approved October 2025),
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)** (Scoping document approved October 2025), and
- **Broad Reproductive** (Scoping document approved November 2025).

Technical work on specific review questions (not full chapter reviews) is currently underway on the **Tuberculosis** broad topic area and has commenced on the **Cardiovascular** broad topic area.

The following items were presented to NEMLC in June 2026 for discussion and ratification:

- The Evidence Review on the use of corticosteroids for the management of TB pericarditis was ratified by NEMLC for publication and will be uploaded on the website once the chapter is finalised.
- NEMLC ratified the update to PHC Chapter 5: Skin Conditions, for levetiracetam to be added to the list of medicines which may induce Drug Reaction with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms (DRESS). The updated chapter and NEMLC report can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Primary-Healthcare-Chapter-5-Skin-Conditions-with-supporting-NEMLC-report-2025-9-Version-1.0-8-June-2026.pdf>
- Following the review of external comments received on AHL Chapter 7: Nephrological Disorders, NEMLC approved the chapter for clinical editing followed by publication.
- Following the review of low-osmolar contrast media agents (LOCM) for the therapeutic interchange, the AHL Chapter 22: Medicines used for Diagnosis was ratified by NEMLC for publication. The updated chapter, NEMLC report and Evidence Review can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Adult-Hospital-Chapter-22-Medicines-Used-for-Diagnosis-with-supporting-NEMLC-report-and-review-2025-9-review-8-June-2026.pdf>
- PHC Chapter 11: HIV and AIDS was updated with revised guidance on the management of the drug-drug interaction between lenacapavir and other select medication. The updated ratified chapter and NEMLC report can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/PHC-11-HIV-and-AIDS-with-supporting-NEMLC-report-and-reviews-Version-1.1-4-June-2026.pdf>
- NEMLC approved the recommendation of trastuzumab in the neoadjuvant setting for HER2+ early local and locally advanced (non-metastatic) breast cancer. The Tertiary and Quaternary Hospital Level EML has been updated to reflect this and the review can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Trastuzumab-Neoadjuvant-Therapy-for-Early-Breast-Cancer-NEMLC-Limited-Review-N-June-2026.pdf>
- The draft STG for PHL Chapter 14: Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, with the inclusion of modified release methylphenidate for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), was ratified by NEMLC for external comment. The documents was accessible on the communications tab of the EDP webpage, on the Request for Comment tab: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>. **The closing date for comments was 13 July 2026.**
- The review on benefits and harms of oral rivaroxaban initiated post-delivery in women diagnosed with venous thromboembolism (VTE) during pregnancy and treated during pregnancy with subcutaneous enoxaparin was ratified by NEMLC for publication and will be published on the website once the chapter has been updated.
- It was reported that there are currently supply constraints with phenobarbital 30mg tablets. The PHC and Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML recommend the use of phenobarbital oral therapy for several indications. In 2025, the Epilepsy Subcommittee of the NEMLC updated the epilepsy STGs and related treatment algorithms reducing the indications for phenobarbital. The role of phenobarbital in the epilepsy related STGs has therefore changed, however, there are a few children and adults who remain on phenobarbital tablets inappropriately. To address these supply constraints, **Notice 20260624/EDP01: Phenobarbital/Phenobarbitone 30 mg tablets - Stock supply shortage and the recommended therapeutic alternatives** was ratified and is accessible here: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Circular-Phenobarbital-Phenobarbitone-30mg-stock-supply-challenge-proposed-therapeutic-alternatives-29-June-2026.pdf>
- SAHPRA recently issued an updated version of the 2019 guideline on proprietary names for medicines (SAHPGL-CEM-NS-03_v8)¹ which includes the decision to align the naming of approved active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) names in the South African schedules with the World Health Organization (WHO) International Non-proprietary Names (INNs). The NEMLC ratified the updating of the STGs to align with the revised SAHPRA Guideline on Proprietary Names for Medicines and a phased approach to align the STGs will be adopted.

¹ SAHPRA. Guideline on proprietary names for medicines. March 2026. Available from: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-hiv-hepatitis-and-stis-programmes/guidelines/stis-guidelines>

ACCESS TO OTHER EML RELATED PAGES

<https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd/>



Master Health Product List (MHPL)

Contains all pharmaceutical products currently awarded on national contracts and can be accessed on the Pharmaceutical Tenders and Contracts page, on the following link:

<https://www.health.gov.za/tenders/>

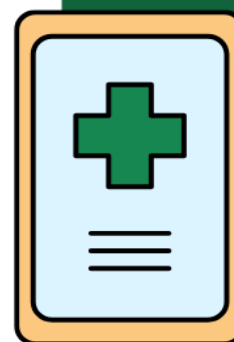
The document also contains different tabs listing pharmaceutical products not awarded on national contracts and a list of items with Provincial Procurement on Quotations (PPQ). The MHPL is updated monthly.

Section 21 Medicines

Refer 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. Medicines not registered with SAHPRA may be considered for review for inclusion in the STGs and EML under exceptional circumstances, as specified in this document:

<https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Section-21-Considerations-for-Inclusion-in-the-STGs-EML-and-Therapeutic-Interchange-Database-28-November-2025.pdf>.

The management of the Section 21 medicines procured in bulk in the public sector is undertaken by the Affordable Medicines Directorate, 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 CMU page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd-cmu/>

Kindly direct all queries, concerns or reports related to stock discrepancies, shortages or other stock related issues to the Department using the following e-mail address: stockalert@health.gov.za, as detailed in Circular no. 13/2025/CMU: Stock Shortage Escalation Protocol circulated on 06 November 2025. (https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Stock-out-Escalation-Protocol_February-2024.pdf)

STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST



The consolidated **PHC STGs and EML 8th Edition (2025-2029 review cycle)**, updated **March 2026** is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Primary Healthcare tab or on the following link: health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Primary-Healthcare-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-8th-Edition-Updated-March-2026-v2.0.pdf



The consolidated **Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML 6th Edition (2025 – 2029 review cycle)**, updated **March 2026**, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Adults tab or on the following link: health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Hospital-Level-Adults-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-6th-Edition-2024_Updated-March-2026.pdf



The completed **Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML (2025-2029 review cycle)** updated **March 2026**, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Paediatrics tab or on the following link: [Paediatric-STGs-and-EML-2025-2029-Review-Cycle_Updated-March-2026.pdf](https://health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Paediatric-Hospital-Level-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-2025-2029-Review-Cycle_Updated-March-2026.pdf)



The **Tertiary and Quaternary Hospital Level EML**, updated **June 2026**, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the following link: [Tertiary-and-Quaternary-EM-recommendations-June-2026.pdf](https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/)

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 & EML

PREVIOUS WEBINARS 2024 - 2025 UPDATES TO THE STGS & EML

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

25 JUNE 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/national-department-health-standard-treatment-guidelines-essential-medicines-list-session-1>

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MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

16 JULY 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/mental-health-updates-ndph-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list>

OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY, & FAMILY PLANNING

30 JULY 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/obstetrics-and-gynaecology-and-family-planning-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential>

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ADULT CRITICAL CARE

13 AUGUST 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/adult-critical-care-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list>

INFECTIONS & ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE SURVEILLANCE REPORT

27 AUGUST 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/infections-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-and-antimicrobial>

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EMERGENCIES AND INJURIES & POISONINGS

17 SEPTEMBER 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/emergencies-injuries-and-poisonings-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines>

HIV & AIDS

29 OCTOBER 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/hiv-and-aids-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list>

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BLOOD AND BLOOD FORMING ORGANS, HAEMOPHILIA

26 NOVEMBER 2024

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/blood-and-blood-forming-organs-and-haemophilia-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential>

CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONS

11 FEBRUARY 2025

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/cardiovascular-conditions-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list>

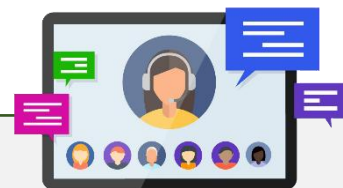
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RATIONAL MEDICINE USE

08 APRIL 2025

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/rational-medicine-use-rmu>



WEBINARS COMPLETED IN 2026 UPDATES TO THE STGS & EML

 **10 February 2026: Epilepsy and Related Conditions**
<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/updates-epilepsy-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list>

Unanswered questions during the webinar have been addressed and can be found at the following link:

<https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/system/files/2026-04/EPILEP~1.PDF>

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>

Additional Webinars

to follow in 2026.

**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/>)

NATIONAL HELPLINE: 0800 012 322 | WHATSAPP NUMBER: 0800 123 456 | info@health.gov.za

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HOME CHIEF DIRECTORATES FAQ RESOURCES PHOTO GALLERY EVENTS

Essential Drugs Programme

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

Equitable Access Availability Quality Medicines Rational Medicine Use

The unit oversees development and implementation of the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STG's) and Essential Medicines List (EML) of South Africa through the ministerially appointed National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC).

The EML refers to the list of medicines deemed to satisfy the priority health care needs of the population.

The STG's provides guidance to health care professionals on the use of medicines which appear on the EML. It consists of a collection of chapters containing disorder groups, background information on the disorder, treatment regimens, as well as other relevant information.

Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List (STGs and EML) Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) Communication

HOME CHIEF DIRECTORATES FAQ RESOURCES PHOTO GALLERY EVENTS

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