

21 May 2020

Dear SARAA members

Feedback: Good news regarding Chloroquine availability

After numerous communications with the Department of Health, SAHPRA and the various pharmaceutical companies, we can now announce that chloroquine sulphate is in stock and at all major distributors. Furthermore, there has been a call from all stakeholders to monitor stock situation more closely to ensure ongoing availability for rheumatoid arthritis and SLE patients. Plasmoquine should be available at all pharmacies next week, where previously not available. All state hospital units should press their respective pharmacies to order.

Please find latest responses.

Comments from SAHPRA (Dr Munbodh) :

“SAHPRA has taken a firm decision that when it comes to the use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, RA and SLE patients must not be deprived of their chronic treatment.”

“**Hydroxychloroquine** is still unregistered by SAHPRA. To access this product, the treating practitioner is urged to submit a Section 21 application through SAHPRA's online submission portal. We will look at ensuring access to hydroxychloroquine to treat RA and SLE via this process.”

Response from Medchem pharmaceuticals (Deidre – dispensing pharmacist):

“We have had many issues in getting the raw product into South Africa since the start of Covid-19, but were able to manufacture another 2,5 million capsules that was distributed to all the wholesalers in South Africa yesterday and the (25 000) 20's will be distributed next week.

We will also start more manufacturing next week to ensure that our supplies are up to date. We supplied a huge amount to Crusana, and Kawari wholesaler who supplies the chronic patients.

We have obtained another batch of API (Raw material) but unfortunately at double the previous price, but this will see us through getting up to date with the current supply.”

Response from DOH (Drs Jane Ridden and Jamooldien):

"We had issues getting the tablets on national contract (only have the liquid formulation on contract). I will however refer this matter to our Contract Management team to try identify what can be done. If we are unable to get local supply, National can facilitate a section 21. In cases where CHQ cannot be obtained we will need to look at the alternative HCQ."

"Response to Medchem stock availability: This information will also be shared with provincial stakeholders tomorrow."

SARAA is constantly monitoring the CHQ access situation and we will continue to do so. If there are issues related to access, please contact us at admin@saraa.co.za.

Warm Regards,

Dr Kavita Makan

