

MEDIA STATEMENT

29 September 2021

MEDICLINIC INTRODUCES MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

As one of the leading healthcare providers in South Africa and Namibia, Mediclinic Southern Africa has made an in principle decision to implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for those working within all Mediclinic hospitals, offices and subsidiaries.

Mediclinic's aim is to create a safe and positive environment for the treatment of its patients as well as for its employees, associated doctors, healthcare professionals and other service providers. We strongly believe that this is the right decision based on the following key considerations:

1. IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO

- The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented public health and workplace challenges and we are faced with a global crisis that necessitates decisive action.
- Factors that were taken into consideration when making this decision include:
 - The likely duration of the COVID-19 risk
 - The nature of healthcare as a frontline industry
 - The nature and severity of the potential harm
 - The likelihood that the potential harm will occur
 - The potential harm to patients
 - The availability of COVID-19 vaccines and their ability to curb the mutation of the virus
- We have to limit the impact of COVID-19. Continued review of leading studies that relate to the effectiveness of vaccination clearly show us that the vaccine reduces COVID-19 related hospitalisation, deaths, the severity and duration of the illness, and the virus's transmissibility to a significant degree. Vaccination will further relieve the pandemic's current burden on the healthcare sector.
- It is our moral obligation. As a frontline healthcare provider, Mediclinic needs to remain more vigilant than most other businesses in its endeavours to protect its patients, employees, associated doctors, other healthcare professionals, service providers who come onto its premises, as well as the general public entering our facilities.
- Professional organisations such as the South African Nursing Council, South African Committee of Medical Deans and the Health Professions Council of South Africa endorse the proposition that healthcare workers and organisations have a professional and ethical responsibility to help prevent the spread of infectious pathogens, including COVID-19, among patients, colleagues and their families, and related communities.
- Mediclinic's purpose is to enhance the quality of life. Implementation of this Policy aims to support its core purpose by ensuring a safer environment for the treatment of its patients.
- In line with our value of mutual trust and respect and the current public health imperatives, we will implement this Mandatory Vaccination Policy to promote Mediclinic's obligation, as a healthcare organisation, to provide a safe environment for patients, employees as well as for associated doctors, healthcare professionals and all other stakeholders working in collaboration with Mediclinic; as well as protecting those coming onto our premises.

2. LEGAL STANCE ON THE MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY

- In the South African legal context, an employer is obliged to ensure a safe workplace.
- We believe that this Policy promotes the rights of all employees to a safe working environment and supports Mediclinic's legal obligation to provide a safe workplace in accordance with the South African Occupational Health and Safety Act ("OHSA").
- The Policy also supports our legal duty to provide a safe environment for our patients and all other persons coming onto our premises including doctors and healthcare professionals.
- In addition to the aforementioned, on 11 June 2021, the South African Minister of Employment and Labour gazetted a Directive on COVID-19 vaccination in specific workplaces in the Consolidated Direction on Occupational Health and Safety Measures, requiring employers to assess and determine the necessity for mandatory vaccination policies taking into account the specific circumstances of their workplace and the requirements of the OHSA Regulations. It also stipulates that employers are required to consider reasonable accommodation in the event that employees refuse COVID-19 vaccinations on medical and/or constitutional grounds.
- The principle espoused by the Directive is that employers and employees should treat each other with mutual respect. Essential considerations are public health imperatives, employees' constitutional rights and efficient business operations.
- The position of a mandatory vaccination policy has been vetted extensively. Mediclinic engaged widely, obtaining input from various experts. Our intended Policy is justifiable given the public health crisis and the overwhelming proof that vaccination is the most effective step that we can take to protect ourselves and others against COVID-19.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND SCOPE

- The Mandatory Vaccination Policy will be implemented on 1 October 2021 and will be rolled out in a phased approach with a due date for compulsory vaccination of 1 February 2022, which means all employees will need to be vaccinated in full by this date.
- Mediclinic is cognisant of the religious and cultural freedoms of its employees. Mediclinic has endeavoured to balance its employees' rights by accommodating reasonable exceptions for those unwilling or unable to be vaccinated.

4. PHASED APPROACH AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The phased implementation of the Mandatory Vaccination Policy includes a comprehensive engagement plan that will kick off on 1 October 2021 with the announcement of the Policy. Thereafter Mediclinic will consult with employees and other stakeholders with a view to providing vaccination related education, counselling, logistical support and the opportunity for employees to consult with clinical experts, healthcare professionals and Mediclinic Human Resources practitioners. The objective of the engagement is to offer compelling evidence and support during the remainder of the year so that employees vaccinate before the mandatory compliance date of 1 February 2022.

Mediclinic views this Policy as a critical step to provide a safe environment for patients and everyone working at our premises, including those of our subsidiaries, whether they work in a hospital, corporate office, or ambulance service. Our priority will be to address our employees, prior to including doctors, healthcare professionals and other service providers in the process.

ENDS

For further information, please contact:

Mediclinic Southern Africa

Tertia Kruger: Corporate Communication Manager

Email: tertia.kruger@mediclinic.co.za

Tel: 021 809 6500