



# SAPC e-Note



## SAPC e-Note: Reminder to Comply to Good Pharmacy Practice

Dear Pharmacist,

### **SAPC e-NOTE: Dispensing of Misoprostol for Medical Abortions**

The South African Pharmacy Council (hereafter referred to as “Council”) received several queries from the public and pharmacists on prescriptions written by authorised prescribers for medicines that are not indicated for (off-label) use, for example, is the use of Misoprostol, widely recognised for its role in medical abortions. Although misoprostol is widely recognised for its role in medical abortions, this is an off-label indication as per the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA). SAHPRA does not have guidelines to manage the dispensing of medicines for off-label use, making it the responsibility of the authorised prescribers and pharmacists to ensure patient safety and adherence to ethical and medical guidelines.

The queries expressed challenges faced by women wishing to receive off-label medications like *misoprostol* for medical termination of pregnancy, that they were refused by the pharmacists citing personal beliefs as grounds for a refusal to dispense.

We wish to remind you that the *Rules relating to the code of conduct* (BN 108 of 24 October 2008) published in accordance with section 35A(b)(i) of the Pharmacy Act 53 of 1974, require that a pharmacist perform their duties for the wellbeing of the patient. Withholding medications like emergency contraception or misoprostol due to personal beliefs may conflict with these ethical standards as the Code of Conduct mandates that pharmacists prioritise the well-being of patients in all professional actions.

In terms of the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy (CTOP) Act, Pharmacists may not prevent or hinder any woman from exercising her choice to terminate a pregnancy. They must always act in the best interest of the patient. It remains the pharmacist’s responsibility to respect the patient’s autonomy in making their reproductive health choices, maintain the patient’s confidentiality, and refer to appropriate healthcare services if they are unable to provide the required services or additional care/ surgical intervention is required.

Council shall have the power to enquire into any matter which is brought to the attention of Council or any complaint, charge or allegation of improper or disgraceful conduct against any person registered in terms of the Pharmacy Act 53, of 1974 and, on finding such person guilty of such conduct, to impose any of the penalties prescribed in [section 45 \(1\)](#).

Yours sincerely,

Vincent Tlala

**Registrar/CEO**

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