

Public Health in the News

No shortage of ARVs in South Africa

Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, has met with top bosses in the pharmaceutical industry over a shortage of medical supplies. Last month South Africans went into a state of panic after the department published on its website a list of medicines that were out of stock. These shortages have affected both the public and private health sectors and are caused by a lack of pharmaceutical ingredients globally. The urgent meeting took place on Friday with 32 executives from pharmaceutical companies and suppliers who have been experiencing difficulties supplying about 155 product lines over the past couple of weeks, the department said in a statement on Monday. "The medicines affected by these shortages include certain antibiotics, cardiovascular medicines, analgesics, anaesthetic agents and central nervous system medicines."

Manufacturers of these medicines were given an opportunity to share the reasons for these shortages. The department said that while each product faces a specific set of challenges, these problems could be categorised into three areas:

- Difficulty with sourcing the active pharmaceutical ingredient and other raw materials
- Unforeseen delays in the formulation and packaging of medicines
- Unanticipated increases in demand for a particular medicine

"Manufacturers have reported that they have already implemented remedial measures to correct the problem, and over the next four weeks they plan to deliver all outstanding orders for the majority of the medicines affected." The department indicated that it will be monitoring the situation and implementing other measures needed to ensure the availability of medicines in the health system. It has also been searching for other global suppliers that may have sufficient stock of these items to assist until supplies are restored...

Source: [Health24, 09 June 2015](#)

Context

Minister Motsoaledi said last month that drug shortages in South Africa were not the result of an uncaring or incompetent government, but rather the pharmaceutical companies that supply medicines. He added that the global shortages were the result of profit-run pharmaceutical companies. This follows a series of media reports in May 2015

which claimed patients in KwaZulu-Natal were being turned away from clinics because of widespread shortages.

Motsoaledi said the shortage of certain drugs in the country had led to fierce attacks on government despite it being unable to control the distribution of the drugs. "It is very easy to fiercely attack government for a non-caring attitude, incompetence, cadre deployment and corruption, as claimed in one statement by the Treatment Action Campaign." He said his department had been quick to investigate claims of a shortage of antiretroviral (ARVs), but says the country has an adequate supply. At the same time, Doctors Without Borders has said the main reason for drug shortages in South Africa was due to management and logistical challenges between the pharmaceutical companies and clinics.

Source: [EWN, 08 June 2015](#)



WAMTechnology assists the health and pharmaceutical industry with custom software development projects. Our clients range from the Private to Public sectors, locally and internationally. Notably, our many successful projects include the development and support of the **Electronic Tuberculosis Register (ETR.Net)** and **Electronic Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Register (EDRWeb)** – which are the **official software tools** used by the South African National Department of Health's Tuberculosis Control Program, to maintain and analyse registered patients.

The "Electronic TB Register" (ETR.Net) is a Microsoft.net-based computer software program, inspired and based on the World Health Organization (WHO) recording and reporting formats. Many of the features of ETR.Net are derived from the "Electronic TB Register" software, a TB surveillance project in southern Africa supported by USAID and CDC (Centres for Disease Control). It was developed to provide for more efficient and useful collection, compilation, and analysis of TB data on an ongoing basis.

CONTACT US: Tel: +27 (0)21 887 7161

WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

Visit our websites:

www.wamsys.co.za
www.municipalassistant.co.za
www.ewisa.co.za