



communication

Dear Member,

It is now just over a year since South Africa declared a National State of Disaster in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and one year later, the country has made significant progress in bringing the pandemic under control.

In the middle of February, Phase 1 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme began and it involved the vaccination of over 250 000 health workers, who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as part of the Sisonke trial.

In readiness for the next stage of vaccinations to begin in May, President Cyril Ramaphosa recently indicated that in addition to the 31 million doses of the one-shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine to be procured, the nation is finalising an agreement for 20 million doses of the two-shot Pfizer vaccine.

Phase two of the COVID-19 vaccination programme is scheduled to start in mid-May 2021. This phase of the programme aims to ensure the protection of essential workers to further help protect our communities, prevent health services from being overwhelmed and reduce the need for lockdowns that seriously disrupt education, the economy and each one of our lives.

In the coming months, we will facilitate the vaccination of eligible members. In line with international best practice, those at the highest risk of hospitalisation will be prioritised.

Who are the eligible members?

- Members over 60 will be vaccinated immediately from May until July 2021.
- Members over 40 but under 60 will be vaccinated from August until November 2021.

Registration to be vaccinated is scheduled to start now in April and members are encouraged to register on-line. Medscheme are in discussions with the Department of Health regarding the registration process, with the aim of ensuring a seamless and efficient registration process. We will be communicating the details of the registration process very soon.

In order to support our members in registering and obtaining the vaccine, please note that, members over 60 years will be receiving an SMS notification reminding them to register on the National EVDS (*Electronic Vaccine Data System*) site. Members over 40 but below 60, will receive an SMS during

June 2021. Furthermore, our Medscheme member walk-in centres are in the process of being accredited to provide vaccinations, which will improve your access to the vaccine as well as the member experience.

We will keep you updated as developments unfold.

Regards,

