



*Guiding the Profession
Protecting the Public*

Friday, July 29, 2022

URGENT

To Whom It May Concern

- Prof. Hanlie Meyer Head of the South African Vaccination and Immunisation Centre (SAVIC)
- Dr Lourens Terblanche, Medical Head, Sanofi, South Africa
- Ms Tsakane Furumele, Director of Communicable Diseases Cluster.
- Ms.Mandi Bhembe Directorate: Affordable Medicines Sub-directorate: Licensing and Regulation, Department of Health.

On Friday, 22 July 2022 at 16h00 we received notification from Sanofi that there is currently a shortage of stock of their yellow fever vaccine, Stamaril®. They mentioned this is a result of increased demand, both locally and globally for available stock.

Sanofi is the sole supplier of yellow fever vaccine in South Africa.

This letter is an urgent appeal to all parties involved to address the situation as a matter of urgency while there is still some vaccine in the country. We propose a solution previously approved by the World Health Organisation and the Government of Canada when faced with a yellow fever vaccine shortage.

It is extremely disappointing that a leading global vaccine producer could not follow world news and plan in accordance with the very well-known large demand for international travel.

South Africa is uniquely positioned in that the continent of Africa is an extremely important destination for both business and leisure travellers alike. Yellow fever vaccine is required for many African countries both for the protection of individual travellers and in order to comply with the requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005) for the prevention of the spread of yellow fever from affected to susceptible countries (e.g., South Africa).

Ironically, Kenya and the WHO announced a yellow fever outbreak in Kenya on 28 July 2022.

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The impact of this "sudden" shortage is as follows:

1. Many South African citizens work in countries that require proof of valid yellow fever vaccination as per the international certificate of vaccination or prophylaxis (ICVP).
2. Many South African citizens work in yellow fever affected countries and are required by the South African Port Health Authorities to provide proof of valid yellow fever vaccination as per the international certificate of vaccination or prophylaxis (ICVP) on entry into South Africa.
3. Yellow fever vaccination is a requirement of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for South African pilgrims who want to embark on Hajj and Umrah
4. As travel medicine practitioners this unannounced stock shortage will place a tremendous financial strain on our members many of whom have been battling to keep their travel clinics afloat during the COVID pandemic.
5. This stock shortage will have a major effect on the local travel industry and its ability to service a local economy that is already facing major economic headwinds.

For this reason, we request that the following measures are urgently implemented to ensure that our membership can continue to provide yellow fever vaccination to the South African travelling public.

- Sanofi must guarantee that this stock shortage is resolved as soon as possible. In the past shortages have persisted for far longer than was initially communicated by the manufacturer.
 - In the current situation, first August and then September 2022 was mentioned
 - We need absolute clarity on the matter.
- We request that in future Sanofi communicate stock shortages at an earlier stage with SASTM and the travel medicine community so that measures to distribute limited stock are implemented amongst our members.
- SAHPRA must please assist Sanofi in expediting the clearance of new stock once it arrives in the country to ensure that our members are able to place orders as soon as practically possible.
- We respectfully and urgently request that SAHPRA and the NDOH immediately approve the fractional dosing of yellow fever vaccine during this stock shortage.
 - This emergency measure will ensure that our members are able to administer vaccines until the new stock becomes available later this year.
 - As per the WHO, fractional dosing will more than quadruple the currently available stock as five, instead of one person can be safely vaccinated with one 0,5ml vial of Smalaril®.
 - This approach has been used in other countries (Canada, Brazil, Angola) in the past during yellow fever outbreaks and vaccine shortages in order to extend vaccine availability (see attached WHO Secretariat Information Paper and CATMAT Statement by the Government of Canada)
 - As per the above examples, fractional vaccination will provide individual travellers with adequate protection against yellow fever as well as protect the South African population against the importation of yellow fever virus with potential disastrous public health consequences.

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- Fractional dosing may be certified on the ICVP, to provide individual protection for up to one year, unlike full vaccination that is considered by the WHO to provide protection "for life"
- Travellers so certified will be provided with a letter explaining the reason for fractional dosing should they be questioned by any port health authority.
- Travellers who received fractional dosing will be instructed to return for a full dose as soon as Stamaril® becomes available again.
- All travel clinics will revert to full vaccination as soon as stock becomes available again, possibly only end September or early October 2022.

We kindly request acknowledgement of receipt of this letter by return mail.

Members of the SASTM Executive Committee are available for an urgent meeting to resolve the matter, fractional dosing in particular, at any time.

Regards

Dr Max Peter Winkler
President of SASTM
MBCHB (UCT) DOH (UCT)

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