



NATIONAL ESSENTIAL
MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE

NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE BULLETIN

FOR THE MEETING HELD ON THE 16 OCTOBER 2025: MEETING OUTCOMES FOR STAKEHOLDER DISSEMINATION

Accessible on the following platform:

National Health Insurance (NHI) Webpage: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>

The following are the latest editions of the Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) and Essential Medicines List (EML)

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE



**STGs and EML 2024
8th Edition**

ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL



**STGs and EML 2024
6th Edition**

PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL



**STGs and EML 2023 Edition
updated May 2025**

TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY



EML October 2025 Edition

ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST SPREADSHEET



A list of all the medicines found in the STGs and is an automatic download from the EDP website

https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Essential-Medicines-List_V1.1-2-October-2025.xlsx

CLICK HERE



ACCESS TO THE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The following formats of the STGs and EML are accepted by the National Department of Health (NDoH):



National Health Insurance (NHI) webpage (latest version of the STGs and EML): The STGs and EML can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>. Refer to Annexure A for guidance on how to navigate the webpage and access the relevant documents.



Knowledge Hub eLibrary on the link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/e-library>. All the STGs, EMLs and related technical documents from the 2020-2024 review period have been moved to the NHI webpage on the NDoH website. If there are any historic technical documents you may require, please email the Essential Drugs Programme (EDP) at SAEDP@health.gov.za.



EMGuidance mobile application: To sign up, use the following link: <http://onelink.to/sy896k>. Please note there may be a delay before the updated documents published on the NHI webpage are uploaded onto the EMGuidance platform. During that process, a temporary link to the latest PDF version of each chapter will be inserted into the affected chapters on the EMGuidance platform. Once the upload is complete, the temporary link will be replaced with the new material and a footer indicating the version number.



For webinar recordings aimed at strengthening implementation of the STGs and EML visit: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>



EML Spreadsheet: Updated version now available – Version 1.1. **New:** Antibiotic AWARe categorisation and tab, as well as corrections to the old version 1.0.



ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, ESSENTIAL DRUGS PROGRAMME CIRCULARS

Circulars developed are disseminated to stakeholders and uploaded on the EDP page on the NHI webpage. These circulars can be accessed on the following links:

NHI webpage: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/> and <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/> (errata). The following circulars were disseminated for the period October 2025 – November 2025:

- ❶ **Notice 2025/11/10/EDP/01:** Paracetamol Use During Pregnancy – 10 November 2025
- ❷ **Circular no. 13/2025/CMU:** Stock Shortage Escalation Protocol – 06 November 2025
- ❸ **Notice 2025/11/03/EDP1:** Notice of Request for Comment on the STG for HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for PHC Level of Care – 03 November 2025
- ❹ **Notice AMD1410202501:** Update on Insulin Availability – 17 October 2025



Please email SAEDP (SAEDP@health.gov.za) if you would like to be added to the mailing list for EDP updates (circulars, chapter updates etc.)



EDP WHATSAPP COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

For the latest updates to the EDP, join our WhatsApp channel below:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/GEN6bH1rKYVKSJ1bz34Ne9>

OR

Scan the QR code



OTHER DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST NEMLC BULLETIN



The Affordable Medicines Directorate's Conflict of Interest Policy has been updated and is published on the Essential Drugs Programme page, Governance and Policies tab on the STGs and EML page on the NHI webpage or can be found on the following link:

<https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Affordable-Medicines-Directorate-AMD-Conflict-of-Interest-Policy-Version-2-9-September-2025.pdf>



CONSOLIDATED ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST FOR ALL LEVELS OF CARE ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

The EML from the latest versions of the STGs and EML has been extracted into an Excel® spreadsheet. The extracted EML is not intended to replace the STGs but should only serve as a guide to which medicines are approved for use in the South African public health sector. For any guidance on how these medicines should be used, the relevant STGs and EML should be consulted. Please review the **'READ FIRST'** tab for further information and disclaimers. This spreadsheet is available for download from the EDP webpage on the National Health Insurance webpage:

<https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>

**THERAPEUTIC INTERCHANGE DATABASE**

The Therapeutic Interchange (TI) database (2019/2020 edition) has been removed from the NDoH webpage as it is being updated to align with the medicine recommendations made during the 2020-2024 NEMLC review cycle. It will be uploaded once the updated version is available. For any interim queries on the TI database, kindly contact the EDP on the following email address: SAEDP@health.gov.za.

The TI Policy may still be accessed at the following link: https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Therapeutic-Interchange-Policy_July2021_final.pdf

ACCESS TO OTHER EML RELATED PAGES - <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd/>

The Master Health Product List (MHPL) which contains all pharmaceutical products currently awarded on national contracts can be accessed on the Pharmaceutical Tenders and Contracts page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd/>. The document also contains different tabs listing pharmaceutical products not awarded on national contracts and a list of items with Provincial Procurement on Quotations (PPQ). The MHPL is updated monthly.

Section 21 Medicines refer to unregistered medicines that can be accessed under specific circumstances by obtaining written authorisation from the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA). SAHPRA may provide authority for the bulk sale and use of the unregistered medicine in accordance with the provisions of the Medicines and Related Substances Act 101 of 1965. The use of the unregistered medicine is considered only for emergency situations where the registered essential medicine is not available for an unmet medical need and there is no therapeutic alternative. The management of the Section 21 medicines procured in bulk in the public sector is undertaken by the Affordable Medicines Directorate, NDoH. The list of medicines currently procured through Section 21 Authorisations can be accessed on the Contract Management Unit (CMU) page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd-cmu/>

Hot List refers to a list of all essential medicines on contract where stock availability remains below 90% and where total orders exceed supplier stock on hand and available stock on hand by provinces is less than two months of forecasted demand. The list includes the root cause for the supply challenge and proposed remedial actions for each listed item. The current Hot List can be accessed on the CMU page, on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-hpp-amd-cmu/>

Kindly direct all queries, concerns or reports related to stock discrepancies, shortages or other stock related issues to the Department using the following e-mail address: stockalert@health.gov.za, as detailed in Circular no. 13/2025/CMU: Stock Shortage Escalation Protocol circulated on 06 November 2025.



Members of the NEMLC and its Expert Review Committee (ERC), and the EDP Oversight Team have published an article titled: **Access to and use of psychotropic medicines in the South African public sector** in the South African Health Review 2024 edition, 10 October 2025. Available at: <https://www.hst.org.za/publications/Pages/SAHR2024.aspx>

The NEMLC Congratulates the Team!



The following items were presented to NEMLC in October 2025 for ratification:

- The Guideline on Publications Emanating from Work Conducted by the NEMLC was ratified for publication, following final editing. The guideline will be published on the Essential Drugs Programme page, under the Governance and Policies tab on the STGs and EML page on the NHI webpage here: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>.
- NEMLC ratified the limited review for pegaspargase to be considered as an alternative to L-asparaginase (therapeutic class); with the most affordable option being procured and where there is price parity, pegaspargase would be preferred. The review has been published on the EDP page, under the Hospital Level - Tertiary and Quaternary tab on the STGs and EML page on the NHI webpage or can be found on the following link: https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NEMLC-Limited-Review_Pegaspargase-N-October-2025.pdf.
- Following ratification of the evidence review and economic analysis on lenacapavir for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), the PHC STG Section 11.11 HIV PrEP has been amended to incorporate lenacapavir as an option for PrEP. The Committee ratified the draft STG, NEMLC Report, evidence review and economic analysis for external comment. The documents are published on the Communication page of the EDP webpage on the Request for Comment tab: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>. It would be appreciated if **comments** can be received by **28 November 2025**.
The Media Statement issued by the NDoH announcing the inclusion of lenacapavir on the EML as an option for PrEP is accessible here: <https://www.health.gov.za/press-statement/>
- The Third-Line Antiretroviral Therapy (TLART) Darunavir/Ritonavir (DRV/r) review was ratified for publication, following final editing. Once finalised the review will be published on the EDP page, under the ARV Drug Resistance Committee (ADReC) tab on the STGs and EML page on the NHI webpage here: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>.
- The NEMLC ratified noradrenaline as an alternative to adrenaline for **septic shock only**, in the event of a stock out of adrenaline.

Topic Prioritisation for the 2025 – 2029 Review Cycle

The NEMLC adopts a systematic approach of topic prioritisation and selection of review topics to inform updates to the STGs and EML. Potential topics are identified through several routes. Stakeholders were invited to nominate topics to help inform topic prioritisation for the NEMLC cycle 2025 – 2029, refer to Notice 2024/12/12/EDP/01. Topics are organised within broad topic areas (e.g. Endocrine) for further scoping and prioritisation therein, as STG chapters are no longer reviewed end-to-end every cycle. Topic nomination for this cycle is now closed, and only urgent items will be considered for addition to the current work plan. There may be a call for external comment on certain chapters during the cycle to assist with topic prioritisation within a broad topic area, if required.

Several broad NEMLC topic areas were approved by NEMLC in June 2025 for further scoping and prioritisation (see the NEMLC Bulletin (4 September 2025) accessible at: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-comm/>). Scoping documents and prioritisation of specific topics were ratified by NEMLC in October 2025 for the following broad NEMLC Topic Areas: Endocrine, Oncology, Respiratory and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Technical work will now commence through the respective ERC Evidence Working Groups.

In Memoriam

The Essential Drugs Programme, NEMLC and ERC is deeply saddened by the passing of our esteemed former Committee member, **Professor Emeritus Patrick Commerford** (1947 – 2025). Prof Commerford will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him. His remarkable contributions and enduring legacy will continue to inspire us.

On behalf of the entire EDP, NEMLC and ERC, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Prof Commerford's family, friends, colleagues, and the broader academic fraternity during this difficult time.

STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The consolidated Primary Healthcare (8th Edition, 2024) STGs and EML is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Primary Healthcare tab or on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Primary-Healthcare-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-8th-Edition-2024.pdf>

ADULT HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The consolidated Adult Hospital Level (6th Edition, 2024) STGs and EML, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Adults tab or on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Hospital-Level-Adults-Standard-Treatment-Guidelines-and-Essential-Medicines-List-6th-Edition-2024.pdf>

PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL LEVEL STANDARD TREATMENT GUIDELINES AND ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The completed Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML, 2023 edition, updated May 2025, is available for download on the NHI webpage on the Hospital Level – Paediatrics tab or on the following link: [health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Paediatric-STGs-and-EML-2023-Edition-Updated-May-2025.pdf](https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Paediatric-STGs-and-EML-2023-Edition-Updated-May-2025.pdf)

- Errata to the Paediatric STGs and EML 2023 edition have been published and can be accessed on: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>
 - March 2025
 - October 2024
 - July 2024
 - January 2024
 - December 2023
- Presentations from the Paediatric Hospital Level STGs and EML 2023 edition webinar launch (held in September 2023) can be found on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab at the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>.

TERTIARY AND QUATERNARY HOSPITAL LEVEL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST

The Tertiary and Quaternary Hospital Level EML, updated October 2025 is available for download on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Tertiary-and-Quaternary-EM-recommendations-October-2025.pdf>

Final reviews and supporting technical documents are published on the NHI webpage on the following link: <https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>



WEBINAR SERIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STGS AND EML

Take note of the advertisements shared *via* the Knowledge Hub mailing list, EDP stakeholder mailing list and through the NDoH Facebook page, for the series of webinars to be held showcasing the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) process applied to the review of the STGs and EML and the updated chapters, medicine reviews and costings that have been published as part of the 2020-2024 review cycle of the PHC and Adult Hospital Level STGs and EML.

Webinar presentations and recordings for the most recent series are available on the Knowledge Hub Webinars tab, on the following link: <https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinars>

Date	Webinar Title	Link
25 June 2024	<u>Webinar 1</u> : Health Technology Assessment	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/national-department-health-standard-treatment-guidelines-essential-medicines-list-session-1
16 July 2024	<u>Webinar 2</u> : Mental Health Conditions – updates to the STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/mental-health-updates-ndoh-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicine-list
30 July 2024	<u>Webinar 3</u> : Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Family Planning STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/obstetrics-and-gynaecology-and-family-planning-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential
13 August 2024	<u>Webinar 4</u> : Adult Critical Care – introduction to new STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/adult-critical-care-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list
27 August 2024	<u>Webinar 5</u> : Infections STGs and EML, and Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Report	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/infections-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list-and-antimicrobial
17 September 2024	<u>Webinar 6</u> : Emergencies and Injuries and Poisonings – Updates to the STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/emergencies-injuries-and-poisonings-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines
29 October 2024	<u>Webinar 7</u> : HIV and AIDS – Updates to the STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/hiv-and-aids-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list
26 November 2024	<u>Webinar 8</u> : Blood and Blood Forming Organs, Haemophilia – Updates to STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/blood-and-blood-forming-organs-and-haemophilia-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential
11 February 2025	<u>Webinar 9</u> : Cardiovascular Conditions – Updates to the STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/cardiovascular-conditions-standard-treatment-guidelines-and-essential-medicines-list
08 April 2025	<u>Webinar 10</u> : Rational Medicine Use – Updates to the STGs and EML	https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/webinar/rational-medicine-use-rmu



Additional webinars to follow in 2026
Watch this space!

Annexure A: Guide on how to access the Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List and related technical documents on the NHI webpage (<https://www.health.gov.za/nhi-edp-stgs-eml/>)

Click here for all information relating to

- PHC STGs & EML
- AHL STGs & EML
- Paediatric Hospital level STGs & EML
- Tertiary & Quaternary level EML

Click here for

- Circulars
- NEMLC bulletins
- Webinars, Presentations & Campaigns

Click on the relevant tab to access updates to the STGs & EML for each level of care

Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines List (STGs and EML)

South Africa has committed to “achieve Universal Health Coverage including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all”, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations. Therefore, an Essential Medicines List (EML) with supporting Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) has been developed, for different levels of care.

The respective STGs and EML for primary healthcare and hospital levels (adults and paediatrics), and the EML for tertiary level of care are described below. The STGs and EML satisfies the priority needs of the South African population, provided for by the National Drug Policy of 1996 and is based on the WHO EML concept of evidence-medicine principles of comparative efficacy, safety, and affordability. Developed and maintained by the ministerially appointed National Essential Medicines List Committee (NEMLC), Technical Expert Review Sub-Committees of NEMLC and the Essential Drugs Programme from the Affordable Medicines Directorate of the National Department of Health (NDoH).

The rationale for inclusion or exclusion of a medicine to the EML is described in NEMLC evidence reports, medicine reviews and costing analyses.

The therapeutic interchange database lists therapeutic alternatives for medicines listed on the respective EML.

Primary Healthcare **Hospital Level - Paediatrics** **Hospital Level - Adults** **Hospital Level - Tertiary And Quaternary** **Governance & Policies**