

CIRCULAR H 19 /2025

**TO: DDG: CHIEF OF OPERATIONS /CHIEF DIRECTORS / DIRECTORS
HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS**

HEAD OF HEALTH: CITY OF CAPE TOWN

**N.B. FOR CIRCULATION TO ALL MEDICAL, PARAMEDICAL, PHARMACEUTICAL, NURSING
PERSONNEL**

PROVISION OF UNINTERRUPTED HIV SERVICES ACROSS ALL HEALTH FACILITIES

In response to the temporary suspension of support by USAID and its implementing partners, the **National Department of Health Director-General** has issued a directive outlining contingency measures for Provinces to ensure uninterrupted HIV treatment services. These measures will be communicated through circulars.

THE FOLLOWING KEY MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION FOR HIV TREATMENT ARE ADVISED:

1. **Prioritized Repeat Prescription Collection Strategies (RPCs) Enrolment** – Encourage all stable clients on antiretroviral therapy (ART) to enrol in differentiated models of care to reduce facility congestion.
2. **Multi-Month Dispensing (MMD)** – MMD for stable ART clients, with 3MMD and 6MMD refills provided where stock allows, at the discretion of the treating clinician.
3. **Late Collection Grace Period** – Extend ART refill collection windows to 28 days to ease clinic visits.
4. **Automatic CDU Script Renewals** – Implement automatic ART script renewals to minimize the need for facility visits.

PROVINCIAL IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE AS FOLLOW:

1. PRIORITIZED REPEAT PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION STRATEGIES (RPCs) ENROLMENT

- Assess every client who has been on ART for more than 3 months for RPCs enrolment.
- Immediately enrol eligible clients and prescribe for 6 months, with at least two 3-month ART refills (2x3MMD) to reduce facility congestion.
- Ensure all stable ART client's transition to RPCs without delay.

2. MULTI-MONTH DISPENSING (MMD)

Consideration must be given to ensure that only adherent and clinically stable patients who have access to adequate storage space are eligible for MMD, based on clinician discretion.

A. THREE-MONTH MULTI-MONTH DISPENSING (3MMD)

- Provide 3-month ART refills to all clinically stable ART clients, who do not require more intensive and frequent clinical management, including:
 - Children older than 6 months.
 - Re-engaging clients once virally suppressed and clinically stable on ART.
 - Post-natal women.

B. PROCESS FOR 3MMD AT CHRONIC DISPENSING UNIT (CDU)

- **Effective 18 February 2025**, CDU will accept **new prescriptions** which may be dispensed for 3 months from the collection date: **1 April 2025**.
- **Prescriptions must be clearly marked** if 3 months of medicine is to be dispensed.
- New prescriptions received requesting a 3 months' supply from CDU will be returned to the facility if there is a current valid prescription at CDU.
- MMD must be submitted to CDU 42 calendar days before the patient collection date.
- **All ART only and ART and prevention treatment** (cotrimoxazole/isoniazid) patients **must** be considered for 3MMD at CDU.
- In addition to ART only patients the following patients may be considered if the treating clinician deems the patient suitable for a 3MMD. **Patients on ARV therapy with:**
 - i. No Schedule 5 item/s prescribed.
 - ii. No insulin or fridge items prescribed.
 - iii. No psychiatric medicines prescribed.
 - iv. A maximum of 4 additional chronic medicines prescribed.
- **Patient Selection Considerations:**
 - Patients must be adherent, clinically stable and have safe storage for their medication.
 - Patient collection rate must be considered to avoid medication wastage.

Cost of uncollected 3MMD at CDU:

This is made up of the service fee plus the cost of returning Patient Medicine Parcels

(PMPs): One-line-item prescriptions:	R 113.43
- Two or more-line-item prescription:	R114.44
- PLUS cost of returning parcel to CDU from 1 April 2025:	R9.45

C. SIX-MONTH MULTI-MONTH DISPENSING (6MMD) FOR PATIENTS ON FIXED DOSE COMBINATION (FDC) TENOFOVIR, LAMIVUDINE, DOLUTEGRAVIR (TLD) ONLY

- **Eligible ART clients** may transition to **6MMD** provided there is sufficient stock of FDC TLD at the facility and based on clinician discretion (considering risk, adherence and suitability).
- **Eligibility criteria for 6MMD:**
 - Two consecutive suppressed viral loads (<50 copies/ml).
 - Meets criteria for RPCs.
 - Clinician-confirmed clinical stability and voluntary patient opt-in.
 - No co-morbidities
- **6MMD is only available through facility-based dispensing** and **will not be offered at CDU** at this stage due to cost.
- Pharmacists should update clinicians on TLD stock levels to support informed 6MMD prescribing decisions, ensuring stock availability is appropriately considered.

3. LATE COLLECTION GRACE PERIOD

- CDU already applies a 28-day grace period to "prompt to dispense" for MMD patients.
- Facilities must establish processes for offsite collections to ensure collection within this grace period.

4. AUTOMATIC CDU SCRIPT RENEWALS FOR 6 MONTHS

- Automatic 6-month script renewals (back-to-back) are already enabled for patients in adherence clubs as these patients return for a clinical visit once a year.
- Facilities must ensure timely submission of prescriptions to CDU to maintain continuity of ART supply for patients.

IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION REQUIRED

All measures outlined must be implemented without delay to ensure uninterrupted HIV treatment services.

Yours sincerely.



DR JO ARENDSE

CHIEF DIRECTOR: ECSS

DATE: 14 February 2025