

FOR PSA MEMBERS: SOUTH AFRICAN HEALTH PRODUCTS REGULATORY
AUTHORITY (SAHPRA)

20-03-2020

What's happening at SAHPRA?

Impact of Crona virus

As in all other workplaces the situation is impacting on operations including the meeting of the Workplace Forum. The employer representative was in self isolation at home during the last meeting, therefore engagement was done through a teleconference. The employer also indicated that issues were awaiting engagement in EXCO and another Forum meeting will be set up to provide feedback.

It was confirmed that the employer had issued a communication allowing employees who show signs of flu to work from home. But it was also acknowledged that the virus will impact on service delivery and cause a delay in processes. The employer is also in the process of putting the necessary hygiene measures such as sanitisers and gloves in place. Another impact will be on feedback meetings to members and employees due to the moratorium on gatherings.

The matter would be discussed in EXCO and a further communication will follow.

Bursaries

EXCO will consider applications. All applicants, whether successful or not will be informed of the outcome.

Organisational recognition and procedural rights agreement (ORPRA)

The PSA questioned why employees were not paid PMDS bonuses on time and demanded that they be paid what is due to them. The DHA stated that the Acting Director-General already approved the submission to effect payments, and it is in the Office of the Minister for approval.

Modernisation

Members were previously informed of the agreement that was tabled by the employer regarding the recognition and granting of organisational rights to a trade union representing at least 30% of employees and to establish a formal bargaining structure. The bargaining structure referred to as the Workplace Bargaining Forum (WBF), will allow for consultation and negotiations regarding matters of mutual interest such as wages and conditions of employment. Members were also informed that eventually agreement could not be reached on two key issues which resulted in PSA declaring a mutual interest dispute at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

The PSA and the employer have since resolved the impasse on these two issues and agreed on the relevant wording. PSA has presented the document to the other recognised trade union in SAHPRA for their consideration since it is imperative that both unions sign the agreement together with the

employer before it becomes binding on all parties. The relevant Union has asked for an opportunity to engage its principals on the document. The PSA and employer are awaiting for their response.

Internal processes for filling of posts

Members were also informed of the processes that unfolded to fill vacant positions on the new organogram. However, it has since transpired that the process was put on hold. The employer indicated that this is mainly due to capacity challenges in the human resource (HR) section. Employees were now informed that an HR Services Manager was appointed. The PSA trusts that the new manager will soon have a team in place to assist with taking this process forward. The employer also indicated that the matter will be discussed at EXCO. It was requested that the report on the placements done and vacancies left be shared with labour. The employer didn't have a mandate to agree but will submit the request to EXCO and respond in due course.

Moving employees from Persal to Sage payroll system

The employer previously informed labour that the Department of Health has indicated that SAHPRA must migrate its employees from the PERSAL payroll system to SAGE with effect from 1 April 2020. As part of this process the employer has engaged both the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) to advise on the deduction process. The Employer now cautioned that due to lack of capacity and the impact of the virus, the process will be delayed. No clear date for the migration is available but a communication will be issued once there is more certainty.

Travel allowance

Members were informed that the allowance will continue until the relocation to the new building at Loftus Park. Unfortunately, the delay in the processing of claims resulting in the allowance continually being paid late, will probably continue until the employer has fully migrated employees to SAGE.

New offices

Members were informed that new offices for SAHPRA had been secured at Loftus Park and is in the process of being prepared for occupation. Labour requested the employer to share the project plan for the relocation and it was agreed that the project manager will be invited to the next Forum meeting to address labour.

Opt out process

The transfer agreement to regulate the migration of employees from National Health to SAHPRA provided for a process where employees could elect to remain with Health. At the time very few members expressed an interest in the process. But recently labour indicated that about 18 employees are interested to remain with Health. Members should note that this is not an automatic right but is incumbent on Health having available vacancies to accommodate such employees and agreeing to the lateral transfer. The employer has also not consulted with Health yet on this process.

GENERAL MANAGER