

Update



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Health Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- Albinism Awareness Month
- Bone Marrow Stem Cell Donation and Leukaemia Awareness Month (15 August to 15 October)
- Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- Eye Care Awareness Month (23 September to 18 October)
- Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Month
- Heart Awareness Month
- National Month of Deaf People
- National Oral Health Month
- Pharmacy Month
- 21 World Alzheimer's Day
- 21-27 World Retina Week
- 25 World Pharmacist Day
- 26 World Environmental Health Day
- 26 World Contraception Day
- 28 World Rabies Day
- 28 World Retina Day
- 29 World Heart Day

OCTOBER

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Month
- Bone Marrow Stem Cell Donation and Leukaemia Awareness Month (15 August to 15 October)
- Eye Care Awareness Month (21 September to 18 October)
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- 28 Oct to 3 Nov National Stroke Week
- 1 International Day of Older Persons
- 7-11 Back Care Awareness Week
- 9-19 National Nutrition Week
- 9-19 National Obesity Week
- 10 World Mental Health Day
- 10 World Sight Day
- 10 World Hospice and Palliative Care Day
- 12 World Arthritis Day
- 12-16 School Health Week
- 12-20 World Bone and Joint Week
- 11-17 National Case Management Week
- 15 Global Handwashing Day
- 16 World Food Day
- 16 World Spine Day
- 16 World Restart A Heart
- 17 World Trauma Day
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 17 National Emergency Medical Services Day
- 20 National Down Syndrome Day
- 20 World Osteoporosis Day
- 20-26 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week
- 21 Global Iodine Deficiency Disorders Prevention Day
- 24 World Polio Day
- 29 World Stroke Day
- 30 Africa Food and Nutrition Security Day

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER'S DESK



At Platinum Health (PH) the wellbeing of our patients, employees and medical staff is of utmost importance. It is for this reason that PH has spent about R10.8 million to implement preventative measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 at all its medical facilities.

Some of these measures include PH staff being equipped with the required personal protective equipment (PPE), additional cleaners provision to ensure that surfaces frequently touched are cleaned and disinfected frequently. Triage areas were established to ensure patients and staff members are screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entering any PH medical facility. Glass screens were installed at receptions and pharmacy counters and extra television sets were installed at medical facilities to share information on COVID-19.

When the lockdown was announced on the 23 March 2020, many members went back to their hometowns without their chronic medication. PH, realising that members would be at risk, sent SMSs, and phoned

members to arrange delivery of their chronic medication to them. It is important to note that in most instances members with comorbidities and the elderly are more susceptible to COVID-19. Members with HIV therefore fall within this category of members with comorbidities. It is for this reason that managing HIV patients efficiently is and will always remain one of Platinum Health's key objectives.

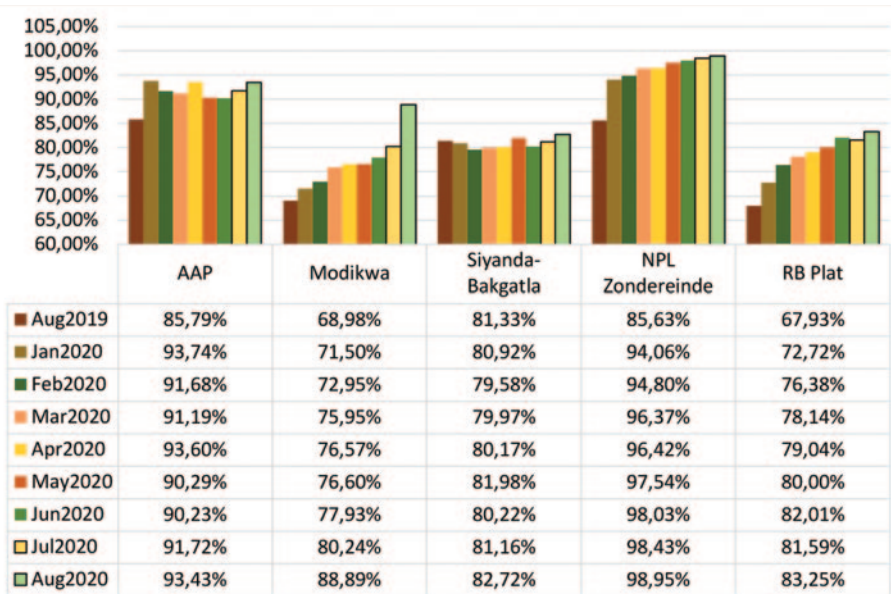
Having said this, I am happy to report that despite the distraction of having to deal with COVID-19, there's been an improvement at all PH sites with regards to viral load suppression results on patients with HIV. This can be attributed to Platinum Health teams at the sites remaining focused and performing exceptionally well.



Looking at the graph below, comparing August 2019 with August 2020, a significant

increase can be seen in the number of patients who receive ARV treatment.

Second 90 - Patients on ARV treatment



Looking at the graph on page 5, Platinum Health is pleased with the improved viral load suppression rates of patients living with HIV who are on treatment. This indicates that people understand the importance of remaining on ARV treatment as it will provide them with an extended, quality life.

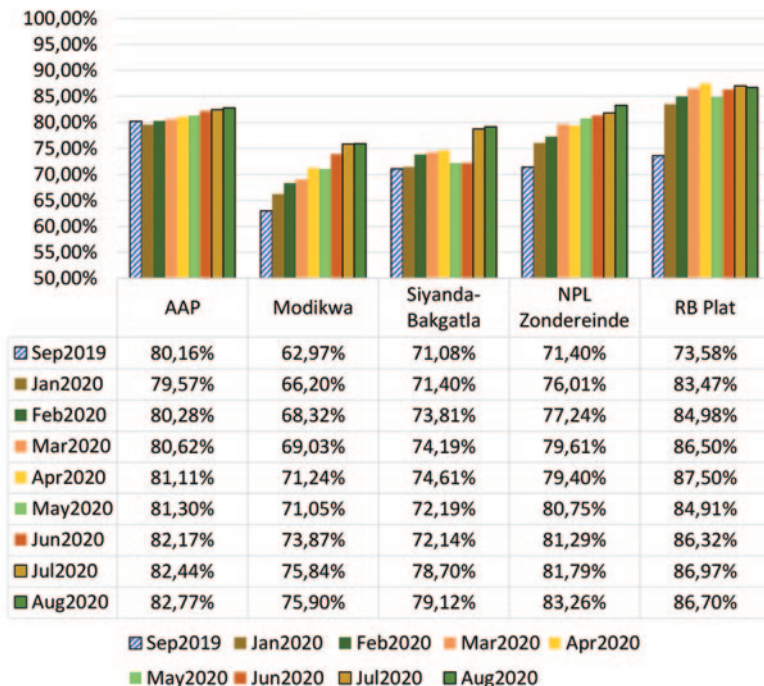
The reality is that COVID-19 is not going away and although the focus mostly remains on it, there are still other comorbidities that are life-threatening if not well controlled. If you are suffering from Hypertension, Diabetes, Cancer, Asthma, Tuberculosis, Chronic liver or kidney disease and HIV, you should take special care of yourself.

Looking at statistics of the past 6 months, 15 out of 218 members admitted in hospital had hypertension as a comorbidity, 62 members had diabetes as an underlying condition and

47 people had HIV as an underlying condition. Looking at deaths, 15 out of 30 people had hypertension as a chronic condition, 9 had diabetes and 9 had HIV as an underlying condition. Although these figures may seem frightening, there are ways to take care of yourself and these are maintaining a healthy diet, exercising or physical activity, where possible as part of your daily routine and take your chronic medication as prescribed. Turn to page 10-13 for more information on how to take care of your physical and mental health.

Although we've seen a decrease in COVID-19 infections over the past months, the COVID-19 pandemic still poses a huge challenge. If we do not continue to take the necessary precautions, we will see a "second wave" of infections as many countries across the world have experienced it.

Third 90 - Patients who are viral load suppressed



Being on level 1, restaurants and bars have been opened, putting members at risk as in these instances masks are not worn where you drink and eat and therefore social distancing is the only option to protect yourself. I therefore urge all members to remain vigilant and take all necessary steps to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. Please continue to practice good hygiene. Wash or sanitise your hands regularly, always wear a mask when out in public or at work and keep a social distance of at least 1.5 to 2 metres from others.

Life as we knew it will never be the same, and the future is about balancing a new normal while keeping COVID-19 in check. We understand that members may be suffering from anxiety and are struggling to cope mentally. This may be due to the usual circumstances of our lives being disrupted and

the changes in the way we relate, live and socialise. It is for this reason that PH established an employee assistance support line which is available to members 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Members who require support and counselling are welcome to call the EAP line on 010 133 0525 and be assured that all telephone calls will be treated private and confidential.

Remember you are not alone. As the scheme we are with you, as our member and your dependents during this trying and uncertain time.

Kind regards
 Welcome Mboniso - Principal Officer



COMORBIDITIES INCREASE RISK OF SERIOUS COVID-19 ILLNESS

COVID-19 is not going away but there are still other comorbidities (or underlying conditions) that are life threatening if not well controlled.

If you are suffering from any of the following conditions, you should take special care of yourself by maintaining a healthy diet, routine exercise or physical activity where possible and taking medication as prescribed; or going for treatment where necessary:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension (blood pressure)
- Cancer
- HIV
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Asthma
- Obesity
- Cardiovascular disease
- Chronic liver or kidney disease

The risk of getting COVID-19 still exists despite the decline in new COVID-19 cases.

Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus. People with comorbidities are more likely than others to become severely ill, which means that they may require hospitalization, intensive care or a ventilator to help them breath, or they may even die.



The most important ways to protect yourself against the severity of the disease are:

Boost your immune system with the supplements Vitamin C, Vitamin D and Zinc.

Monitor and control your blood pressure if you suffer from hypertension.

Monitor and control your glucose levels if you have diabetes.

If you suffer from obesity, make every effort to lose weight.

Make sure you have an adequate supply of medicine.

Continue to adhere to COVID-19 precautionary measures.

Always wear a mask in public and at work.

Wash/sanitise hands often.

Keep a social distance of 1.5 – 2 metres from others.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle and eating habits and exercise regularly.

If you have an underlying condition, continue with your usual treatment – make sure you never miss out on even a day of medication.

Get seven to eight hours of sleep.

Reduce exposure to tobacco smoke.

Keep well hydrated, preferably by drinking water.

Take care of your mental health by remaining calm and positive – try not get caught up in a cycle of stress.

Take chronic medicine as prescribed, which means taking the right dose, at the right time, in the right way and frequency.



MY MASK PROTECTS YOU YOUR MASK PROTECTS ME

The use of masks as an additional preventative measure against COVID-19 has been recommended for public use by the National Department of Health.

With this in mind; Platinum Health purchased 77 000 masks with the aim of providing it to its members. Following consultations with mine management and trade unions, the scheme has been visiting participating stakeholders and handing out masks to members to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Please follow the recommended rules of usage of masks:

- Masks should cover your nose and mouth entirely.
- Do not lower the mask when talking, coughing or sneezing.
- Wash (cloth) mask with soap and water and iron when dry.





AUG 2020 TD PLAN MTD ACTUAL TO

MONTHLY BUDGET
JANUARY ACTUAL

#HEALTHYHABITS –

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

Eating a healthy diet is very important during the COVID-19 pandemic. What we eat and drink can affect our body's ability to prevent, fight and recover from infections.

While no foods or dietary supplements can prevent or cure COVID-19 infection, healthy diets are important for supporting immune systems. Good nutrition can also reduce the likelihood of developing other health problems, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer. For babies, a healthy diet means exclusive

breastfeeding in the first six months, with the introduction of nutritious and safe foods to complement breastmilk from age 6 months to 2 years and beyond. For young children, a healthy and balanced diet is essential for growth and development. For older people, it can help to ensure healthier and more active lives.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING A HEALTHY DIET:

EAT A VARIETY OF FOOD, INCLUDING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

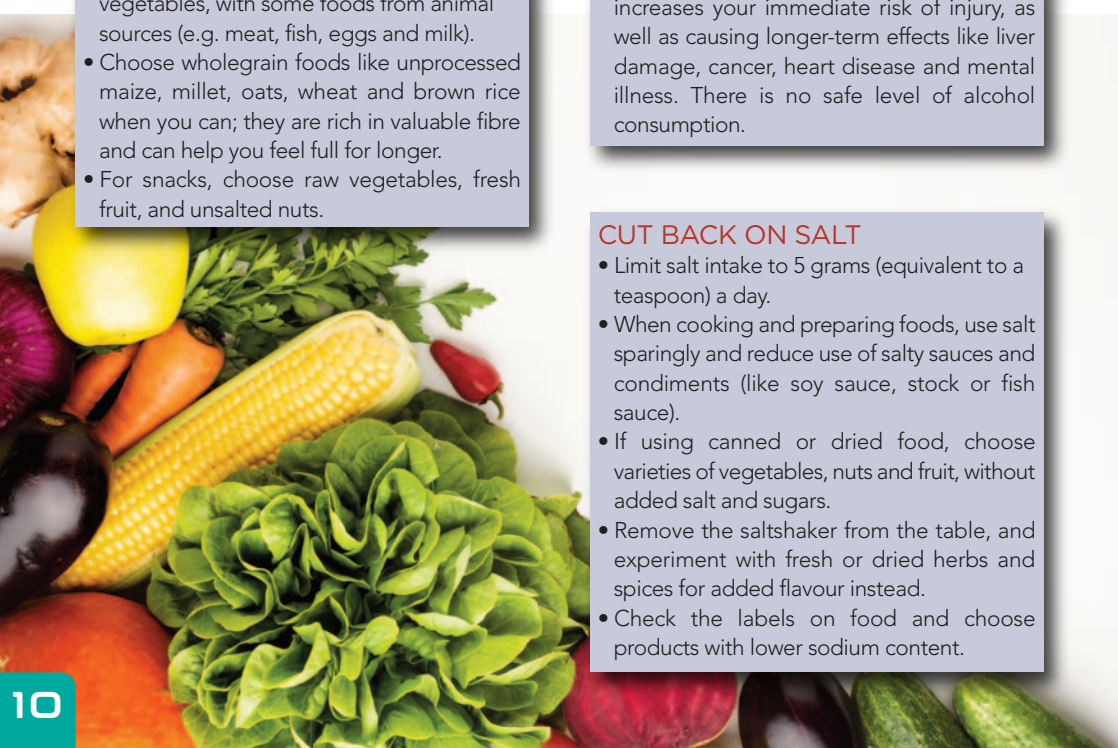
- Every day eat a mix of wholegrains like wheat, maize and rice, legumes like lentils and beans, plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, with some foods from animal sources (e.g. meat, fish, eggs and milk).
- Choose wholegrain foods like unprocessed maize, millet, oats, wheat and brown rice when you can; they are rich in valuable fibre and can help you feel full for longer.
- For snacks, choose raw vegetables, fresh fruit, and unsalted nuts.

AVOID HAZARDOUS AND HARMFUL ALCOHOL USE

- Alcohol is not a part of a healthy diet.
- Drinking alcohol does not protect against COVID-19 and can be dangerous.
- Frequent or excessive alcohol consumption increases your immediate risk of injury, as well as causing longer-term effects like liver damage, cancer, heart disease and mental illness. There is no safe level of alcohol consumption.

CUT BACK ON SALT

- Limit salt intake to 5 grams (equivalent to a teaspoon) a day.
- When cooking and preparing foods, use salt sparingly and reduce use of salty sauces and condiments (like soy sauce, stock or fish sauce).
- If using canned or dried food, choose varieties of vegetables, nuts and fruit, without added salt and sugars.
- Remove the saltshaker from the table, and experiment with fresh or dried herbs and spices for added flavour instead.
- Check the labels on food and choose products with lower sodium content.





EAT MODERATE AMOUNTS OF FATS AND OILS

- Replace butter, ghee and lard with healthier fats like olive, soy, sunflower or corn oil when cooking.
- Choose white meats like poultry and fish which are generally lower in fats than red meat; trim meat of visible fat and limit the consumption of processed meats.
- Select low-fat or reduced-fat versions of milk and dairy products.
- Avoid processed, baked and fried foods that contain industrially produced trans-fat.
- Try steaming or boiling instead of frying food when cooking.

BREASTFEED BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

- Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies which help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Babies should be breastfed exclusively during the first 6 months of life, as breast milk provides all the nutrients and fluids they need.
- From 6 months of age, breast milk should be complemented with a variety of adequate, safe and nutrient-dense foods. Breastfeeding should continue under babies at 2 years of age or beyond.

STAY HYDRATED: DRINK ENOUGH WATER

- Good hydration is crucial for optimal health.
- Whenever available and safe for consumption, tap water is the healthiest and cheapest drink. Drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages is a simple way to limit your intake of sugar and excess calories.

LIMIT SUGAR INTAKE

- Limit intake of sweets and sugary drinks such as fizzy drinks, fruit juices and juice drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavoured water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea and coffee and flavoured milk drinks.
- Choose fresh fruits instead of sweet snacks such as cookies, cakes and chocolate. When other dessert options are chosen, ensure that they are low in sugar and consume small portions.
- Avoid giving sugary foods to children. Salt and sugars should not be added to complementary foods given to children under 2 years of age and should be limited beyond that age.

TIPS FOR FOOD SAFETY DURING COVID-19

There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread through contact with food or food packaging. COVID-19 is generally thought to be spread from person to person. However, it's always important to practice good hygiene when handling food to prevent any food-borne illnesses.

Follow the following tips to safer food:

- Keep it clean
- Separate raw and cooked
- Cook thoroughly
- Keep food at safe temperatures
- Use safe water and raw materials.

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)



MANAGING ADDICTION DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 presents challenges for all of us, but those struggling with addiction are particularly vulnerable during this time.

Not only does this change how you receive help, but the effects of uncertainty and stress could also trigger a relapse for those already in recovery.

Social support and active involvement in a programme play a huge role in recovery and widespread shutdowns and social distancing measures have made it difficult for those seeking treatment. Truth is that addiction is a daily struggle and the tools on which you normally rely on have changed.

The good news is that there is help available. At the start of the lockdown Platinum Health established an Employee Assistance

Programme (EAP) support line, which is available to members, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Finding support during this difficult time is essential for both your mental and physical health. So, if you're struggling, be sure to call the EAP support line or alternatively talk to a Platinum Health therapist. Visit the Platinum Health website (www.platinumhealth.co.za) to find a therapist closest to you.

Here are a few strategies for reducing the risk of a relapse:

- **Embrace physical distance, not emotional distance.** Avoid isolation. Talk to your counsellor or therapist and reach out to family and friends for encouragement and support.
- **Stick to a daily routine.** Without structure, you will struggle. Anxiety, depression and fear can lead to unhealthy habits such as alcohol and drugs that offer immediate relief. You don't have to plan every minute of your day but try to develop a consistent schedule. Find time to take a walk, cook your meals, and pursue something that keeps you engaged.
- **Try to eat balanced, nutritious meals** to boost happy hormones, fuel your brain, and boost your immune system.
- **Listen to recovery podcasts,** read blogs, or talk to others in recovery.
- **Make time for self-care.** If you're not up for exercising, take a hike or follow a workout video. Engage in healthy hobbies; YouTube offers plenty of how-to videos. Be kind to yourself.
- **Hold on to hope.** Self-compassion is a key aspect of recovery. Don't allow shame, guilt or anger to hold you back. Addiction is a disease and recovery are a process. List your goals and keep them where you can see them. And, if you do experience a relapse, offer yourself forgiveness instead of judgement. Honour the progress you've made instead of viewing yourself as a failure.

No matter how challenging things might feel right now, you've come a long way. Respecting your journey so far and continuing to work toward the future can help you stay grounded.

Remember, you are not weak for struggling, you are strong for continuing to fight.





COPING WITH STRESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic may be stressful for members as fear and anxiety about the new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in young and old.

Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Taking care of your emotional health

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a disaster. Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Notice and accept how you feel. Taking care of your emotional health

during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family. Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing.

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans during an emergency and monitor for any new symptoms.

Take the following steps to cope with the pandemic:

- **Take care of your body** – Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco,

and other drugs.

- **Connect with others** – Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships and build a strong support system.
- **Take breaks** – Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths, and activities you usually enjoy.
- **Stay informed** – When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Be aware that there may be rumours during a crisis, especially on social media. Try taking deep breaths and do activities you usually enjoy. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from reliable sources such as:
 - World Health Organisation (WHO) (<https://www.who.in>)
 - South African Department of Health (DoH) (www.health.gov.za)
 - National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) (www.nicd.ac.za)
 - South African Coronavirus Portal (www.SACORONAVIRUS.co.za)
- **Avoid too much exposure to news** – Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible.



LOOK OUT FOR THESE COMMON SIGNS OF DISTRESS:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration.
- Changes in appetite, energy and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares.
- Physical reactions, such as headache, body pains, stomach problems and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.



SEEK HELP WHEN NEEDED

If distress negatively impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, contact the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) helpline at 010 133 0525.



EAP Councillors are available 24 hours/day 7 days/week to offer support, guidance and encouragement.



#HEALTHYHABITS – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The COVID-19 pandemic means that many of us have been staying at home and sitting down more than we usually do. It's hard for a lot of us to do the sort of exercise we normally do. It's even harder for people who don't usually do a lot of physical exercise. But at a time like this, it's very important for people of all ages and abilities to be as active as possible.

Remember - Just taking a short break from sitting, by doing 3-4 minutes of light intensity physical movement, such as walking or stretching, will help ease your muscles and improve blood circulation and muscle activity.

Regular physical activity benefits both the body and mind. It can reduce high blood pressure, help manage weight and reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and various cancers - all conditions that can increase susceptibility to COVID-19.

It also improves bone and muscle strength and increases balance, flexibility and fitness. For older people, activities that improve balance help to prevent falls and injuries. Regular physical activity can help give our days a routine and be a way to stay in contact with family and friends. It's also good for our mental health - reducing the risk of depression, cognitive decline and delay the onset of dementia - and improve overall feelings.

