

MEMORANDUM

Date: 18 April 2020

To: All Staff

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): Resumption of SSC Operations

Dear colleagues,

As we know that due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, which has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the SA government declared a National State of Disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002 on 15 March 2020 (Government Notice No. 313 of Government Gazette No. 43096). Subsequently, the country was put under Lockdown for 21 days from midnight 26 March 2020. The Lockdown regulations only allowed for the continuation of essential services. The lab agreed to the request by the local hospitals to resume the supply of Iodine-123 in May 2020.

During the Lockdown period iThemba LABS continued the supply of the 18F-FDG radiopharmaceutical to local hospitals albeit on a limited basis, as previously communicated. The production of 18F-FDG only requires the operation of the 11 MeV cyclotron and we operated on a skeletal personnel that operated on a rotating basis. This enabled us to switch off the SSC and reduce the density of staff on site, in accordance with the Lockdown regulations.

On 25th March 2020, amended regulation No 419 was published with reference to the amendment Regulation 11B (3) (b) *“Services in relation to international markets and which provide or maintain essential services as it relates to health, social support, government and financial services, which the Cabinet members responsible for health and for trade, industry are satisfied are crucial to such services, may be provided for in directions issued by the said Cabinet members.”*

This amendment require of us to resume the production and distribution of the following radiopharmaceuticals:

1. Sr-82 used for the preparation of $^{82}\text{Sr}/^{82}\text{Rb}$ generators for myocardial perfusion PET imaging; and
2. Ge-68/Ga-68 generator used for the PET diagnosis of neuroendocrine tumours.

The production of Iodine-123, used for tumour localisation and for observing heart, kidney, thyroid and brain function, requires the 66 MeV proton beam, and we will therefore resume the operations of the SSC and the related radioisotope production facilities to honour our agreement with the local hospitals; and for the production and distribution of Sr-82 and Ge-68/Ga-68 generator for export to the international clients.

I hereby inform you that we will resume the normal operations of the SSC and radioisotope facilities from Wednesday 22 April. We will continue the production activities in accordance with the COVID-19 specific Health and Safety scheme to warrant organisational compliance in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and to safeguard against the spread of COVID-19 amongst staff.

The managers of the affected departments will inform the staff about the measures that will be implemented to keep the number of staff on site to a minimum and about any additional safety measures that will be put in place as and when required.

With kindest regards and best of wishes to you and your families.

iThemba LABS COVID-19

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F Azaiez', written in a cursive style.

Director, Dr F Azaiez