



TAYFIN TAXTALK

ACCOUNTANTS & FORENSIC AUDITORS

“Your Empowered Insight into the World of Tax, Business and Personal Finance Issues.”

‘Profit above ethical considerations’

Our **Community** is plagued by drugs and drug related problems. We condemn the conduct of drug dealers and addicts that endlessly contribute to widespread anti-social behaviour. We do so hypocritically because most of us are aware that certain (not all) **doctors** and **pharmacists** are freely dispensing opiate drugs regardless of ethical and legal implications. These morally bankrupt practitioners only subscribe to the ‘All Mighty Dollar’ or in our case - the rand.

In order to confront this pandemic, we must understand the legislative frameworks governing health professionals and use the safeguards contained in the **Act** to bring these deviants to book.

The **Health Professions Council of South Africa** (HPCSA) is a statutory body founded through the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974, “the Act”, which regulates health professions.

The **HPCSA** sets the standards for registration, training, ethics, conduct, and professional skills of health professions, including doctors.

According to the Act, ‘unprofessional conduct’ *means improper or disgraceful or dishonourable or unworthy conduct or conduct which, when regard is had to the profession of a person who is registered in terms of the Act, is improper or disgraceful or dishonourable or unworthy”*

The **HPCSA** may take disciplinary action against health practitioners who display unethical, unprofessional and/or improper conduct, which include, among others, indiscretions such as incompetence with regards to the treatment of patients, issuing prescriptions to patients already addicted to the medicine and insufficient care towards patients.

Similarly, pharmacists are regulated by the South African Pharmacy Council, (SAPC) a body founded through the **Pharmacy Act No. 53 of 1974**, which performs similar functions as the **HPCSA**.

The **SAPC** is also tasked with disciplinary actions against pharmacists who display unprofessional and unethical conduct.

Unethical and illegal conduct includes - misuse and abuse of over the counter and prescription opiates (drugs containing compounds derived from the opium poppy) and opioids (natural or synthetic drugs which bind to the body’s opioid receptors).
Opiates and **Opioids** are predominantly used for the treatment of moderate to severe pain. **Codeine** is a common opioid and can be found in a variety of medications including Benylin, Myprodol, Sinutab C, Adcodol and Sinumax C among others.

Continued use of **Opioid Drugs** can lead to dependency and addiction, which can result in severe side effects including anxiety, nausea, liver damage, developing a tolerance to the drug, constipation, depression, respiratory problems and sensitivity to pain.

The **Medicines and Related Substances Act No. 101 of 1965** provides for the registration and regulation of medicines and related substances intended for human and animal use.

In order to obtain scheduled drugs, a prescription from a doctor, dentist or allied health professional, is required which must be taken to a pharmacy to be filled.

By law, only a **6-month repeat prescription for schedule 3 and 4** medicines are permitted.

Medicines with a high scheduling status (usually **schedule 5** and above) are treated differently because of its routine-forming nature and possible damaging side effects.

Pharmacists are obliged to keep a record of all sales of repeat prescriptions.

The **ethical guidelines** for healthcare professionals published by the **HPCSA** form an integral part of the standards of professional conduct against which a complaint of professional misconduct will be evaluated.

According to the guidelines, healthcare professionals have a duty towards their patients that includes having the best interests and wellbeing of the patient as their primary professional duty.

When practitioners violate the ethical line in the name of **profit**, the moral duty of exposing them becomes the responsibility of you, me and ‘Joe Citizen’.

Question: Is this a drug operation under the guise of healthcare?

If you or your loved ones fall victim to this type of unethical and illegal conduct, register your **complaint** by emailing legalmed@hpcsa.co.za.

The **HPCSA** has a zero-tolerance policy towards fraud and other irregularities. Any **fraudulent** acts or irregularities can be reported to the **Fraud and Corruption Hotline** on 0801122565 / hpcsa@tip-offs.com

Complaints against pharmacists can be lodged through the **SAPC** website www.pharmcouncil.co.za .

A **Complaint** to the **SA Pharmacy Council** must be made through an online process via the above webpage.

Alternatively, a call can be made to the **SAPC Customer Care line** on (012) 321 1492 / or by emailing customercare@sapc.za.org

In addition, register a case at SAPS so that these scoundrels can be charged, named and shamed.

The drug problem is so widespread that the **Minister of Police** is set to engage the **Asset Forfeiture Unit (AFU)** to seize all property - of those found to guilty of such practice - to the State in terms of the **Proceeds Of Crime Act (POCA)**.

This is indeed a welcoming step.

Morality Upheld.

If your health practitioner lacks these ethical principles -

- Respecting autonomy.
- Doing no harm (non-maleasance)
- Benefiting others (Beneficence)
- Being just (Justice)
- Being faithful (Fidelity)

- you should change to a health practitioner that does.

TAYFIN ERASMIA

TAYFIN SANDTON

TAYFIN RUSTENBURG

TAYFIN CAPE TOWN

For any comments or suggestions regarding this advert or future issues, please contact our offices at 014 592 3234 / management.rtg@taygro.co.za.
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