

The Professional Board for Optometry and Dispensing Opticians has been inundated with queries from practitioners on whether they can start operating their practices during Level 4 of the current lockdown due to COVID-19. The Board would like to provide the following guidance in due consideration that level 4 lockdown is not business as usual:

- a. Practitioners must use their professional discretion to treat only **urgent** conditions and/or perform **essential** services. Any service that is not essential or a condition that does not require urgent intervention should rather be postponed to a later stage.
- b. Practitioners are reminded that the minimum standards of examinations as well as the relevant Board guidelines are still applicable. As such, practitioners are not allowed to perform substandard examination or services. Where certain prescribed minimum tests/procedures cannot be performed, practitioners rather postpone the entire examination and/or refer the patient to another eyecare practitioner who under these circumstances has the capacity to conduct such tests/procedures.
- c. Practitioners must at all times observe all the safety protocols and measures pronounced by the Government.
- d. Practitioners should continuously educate themselves on COVID-19 and its ocular manifestations.
- e. Patients need to be educated on COVID-19 and be encouraged to also observe all the pronounced safety protocols and measures. Where possible, educational material (posters, brochures, pamphlets) should be placed in waiting areas and other visible places within the practice.
- f. For the protection of both practitioners and patients; a consent forms should be signed where patients confirm that they urgently require the services of the practitioner and that they understand the prevailing risks of COVID-19.

**ENDS**

For further enquiries, kindly contact [ODOboard@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:ODOboard@hpcsa.co.za)