



Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism

1 July 2024

C/O Christina Pitt

RE: BHEKISISA MEDIA QUERY

1. Why did Novo Nordisk decide not to renew its contract for human insulin pens?

We have entered into an agreement with the health authorities in South Africa to continue supplying our human insulin in vials, administered via disposable syringes, to ensure continuity of care for patients living with diabetes in the region. However, it is correct that current manufacturing capacity limitations mean that patients in some countries, including South Africa, may have limited access to our human insulin in pens. This was communicated to the South African health authorities in a letter dated 2 October 2023 so they were informed back then that we were not able to take part in the tender but that we would still be able to supply our human insulin in vials.

At the same time, we are expanding our production of human insulin to the African continent, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, to ensure that more patients living with diabetes in Africa have access to life-saving insulin. Last year, we established a new partnership with Aspen Pharmacare, located in South Africa, to produce human insulin. The ambition is to produce 60 million vials of human insulin by 2026.

You can read more about the partnership here [New partnership to supply human insulin \(novonordisk.com\)](https://www.novonordisk.com)

2. Was it a patient-centred decision to transition South Africans in the public sector to vials and syringes?

Patients will have access to the same human insulin in a vial rather than a pen. All our products have been tested in large clinical trials and found to be effective and safe—whether administered in a pen or from a vial.

3. The department of health and representatives of MSF Access Campaign say that Novo Nordisk has chosen to prioritise the production of GLP1s because they are more profitable than insulin sets. Is there any truth to that?

Our current manufacturing capacity limitations for human insulin in pens mean that we are unable to participate in the new tender negotiation with authorities. The manufacturing capacity restrictions at some of our production sites affect several of our products and we are in an ongoing dialogue with local health authorities to ensure continuity of care for these essential treatments.

4. How does Novo Nordisk plan to make newer forms of diabetes medication more affordable for LMICs?

In low- and middle-income countries, our focus is to reach as many people as possible who need life-saving insulin.

Read more: [Therefore, as part of our affordable care program, we offer our human insulins in Africa with a price cap of \\$3 per vial.](#)

Kind Regards,

Thabeng Leping
Market Access and Public Affairs Director
Novo Nordisk (Pty) Ltd – South Africa
tglp@novonordisk.com
Tel: 011 202 0500

Sara Norcross
Vice President & General Manager
Novo Nordisk (Pty) Ltd – South Africa
snzz@novonordisk.com
Tel: 011 202 0500

Novo Nordisk (Pty) Ltd.
Co. Reg. No.
1959/000833/07
www.novonordisk.com

ZA24ACTP00003

Head Office
150 Rivonia Road
10 Marion Street Office Park,
Building C1 Sandton, Johannesburg
2196
P O Box 783155
Sandton, 2146
GPS COORDINATES:
-26.094082,28.056496

Tel: +27 11 202-0500
Medical: +27 11 807-4644
Pharmacovigilance: +27 11 807-8724
Orders: +27 11 807-4252
Admin: +27 11 807-5208
Sales & Marketing: +27 11 807-7989
Clinical: +27 11 807-464