



PRESS RELEASE

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PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM DECEPTIVE CONDUCT AND EXCESSIVE PRICING DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

One of the mandates of the Competition and Fair Trading Commission is to protect consumers from unfair trading practices. Since the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, the Commission has been actively monitoring the market and inspecting business premises to ensure that opportunistic pharmaceutical companies and traders were not taking advantage of the pandemic to infringe on the rights of consumers.

During monitoring and inspections carried out in the months of January and February 2021, the Commission has observed that some pharmaceutical companies and traders were taking advantage of the pandemic to exploit consumers through deceptive conduct and excessive pricing of essential personal protective equipment used in the management of COVID 19.

For instance, some traders have been promoting and marketing certain products as cure or treatment of COVID 19. According to international health authorities, there is no clinically tested and approved product which can cure COVID 19. Any trader found representing that their product can cure COVID 19 would be violating the Competition

and Fair Trading Act and the Consumer Protection Act. Similarly, any trader found pricing excessively would be infringing the law.

Section 43(1)(d) of the CFTA states that a person shall not, in relation to a consumer, engage in conduct that is likely to mislead the public as to the nature, price, availability, characteristics, suitability for a given purpose, quantity or quality of any products or services. Further, Section 43(1)(g) of the CFTA states that a person shall not, in relation to a consumer, engage in unconscionable conduct in trade of goods and services.

To deal with the suspected infringements, the Commission has instituted formal investigations against five pharmaceutical companies and traders. The Commission will impose stiff sanctions against any pharmaceutical company or trader found engaging in deceptive practices or any other trade malpractices such as excessive pricing in the supply of supplies used in the management of COVID 19.

Finally, the Commission is appealing to all consumers to observe laid down health rules as a way of mitigating the spread of COVID 19.

For more information, you may contact Innocent Helema on 0880725075 or email innocent.helema@cftc.mw.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JK' with a stylized flourish.

JAMES KAPHALE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR