

## PRESS STATEMENT

16 December 2022

### RE: UNSAFE USE OF GLUTATHIONE AND INJECTABLE VITAMINS AS SKIN LIGHTENING AGENTS

The mandate of the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ) is to protect public health by ensuring that all medicines and medical devices on the market are safe, effective and of good quality. Thus, in order to uphold this mandate, all medicines should be registered by the MCAZ prior to marketing and use. To know which medicines are approved to be sold in Zimbabwe you should visit the MCAZ online register, <https://onlineservices.mcaz.co.zw/onlineregister/frmRegistersHome.aspx> where a list of all registered medicines is found.

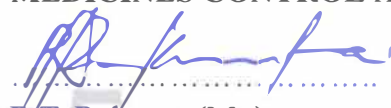
The MCAZ warns the public on the dangers associated with the use of skin lightening products such as oral /injectable Glutathione and injectable Vitamins. To date there are no published clinical trials that have evaluated the use of oral/injectable Glutathione and injectable Vitamins for skin lightening. There are also no published guidelines for appropriate dosing regimens and duration of treatment. Glutathione and Vitamins are registrable products. The MCAZ has not approved/registered any injectable products or such products for skin lightening.

Side effects on the use of injectable glutathione for skin lightening include toxic effects on the liver, kidneys, and the nervous system. Furthermore, the side effects may include severe skin reactions such as Stevens Johnson syndrome, hives or allergic reactions, weight gain, losing pigmentation of hair, eye infections and disorders. Glutathione also affects the production of melanin, the pigment that gives the human skin, hair and eyes their color. Injectable Glutathione is sometimes paired with intravenous Vitamin C, and Vitamin C injection may form kidney stones if the urine is acidic. Large doses of Vitamin C have resulted in hemodialysis in patients with glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Other potential risks include transmission of infectious agents, such as HIV, hepatitis C and B. This is of particular concern when non-medical practitioners administer these treatments.

The Authority has noted with concern that several beauty salons, wellness and beauty shops are offering all kinds of beauty enhancements, services, and skin treatments. It is alarming that these also offer services such as intravenous drips or infusions using skin lightening agents including Glutathione tablets or injectables combined with injectable vitamins.

It is an offence to sell unregistered medicines without authorisation. As the Authority responsible for protecting public and animal health, MCAZ enforces adherence to the use of registered medicines and will exercise its statutory mandate against perpetrators of these criminal acts.

### MEDICINES CONTROL AUTHORITY OF ZIMBABWE



R.T. Rukwata (Mr.)

**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

