The existence of COVID- 19 has created shock waves around the world.  The  now extended  lockdown imposed on South African Citizens by  President, Cyril Ramaphosa  will have detrimental economic consequences on businesses throughout the country.

From a practice perspective, all operational decisions are to be considered within the context of a declared national disaster and in the face of the threat of an invisible, silent highly contagious micro-organism that has taken the lives of thousands of global citizens.  Taking cognisance of the risks of exposure to COVID 19 infection, the South African Optometric Association (SAOA) has issued a directive to optometrists and dispensing opticians to close practices for the duration of the lockdown and only see patients in extreme emergency situations. The SAOA position is attached for your information.

For optometric practices, in general, a zero income for at least five weeks, considering significant reductions in client consultations for at least two weeks preceding the lockdown, creates a special set of circumstances.   There will be practices that may be able to weather the storm; there will be practices that will not.

In terms of employer/employee relationships, there are a number of options available to accommodate the financial challenges that have arisen as a consequence of the lockdown. There are, of course, also circumstances and challenges that are specific to Sam Schneider Optometrist; nevertheless, as a valued member of the practice, I can confirm that your salary will be paid in full for the lockdown period, anticipated to end at end April 2020.

You will appreciate that the above arrangement is possible, based on information available and current circumstances. My rights, however, remain reserved. In the event that circumstances change, I may have no option but to institute a different approach to accommodate operational requirements and challenges that may arise at that time.

Thank you for understanding and stay safe.

Yours Sincerely,