



Republic of Botswana

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PRESS RELEASE

CAUTION AGAINST ILLEGAL TRADE OF CONTACT LENSES AND OPHTHALMIC FRAMES

The Ministry of Health and Wellness informs the public that trading of contact lenses including ophthalmic frames by unauthorised personnel and advertising outlets is prohibited. Contact lenses should not be bought from places not designated to provide health services as they may not be backed by any clinical evaluation.

Furthermore, contact lenses, just like any medical devices, are approved by Botswana Medicine Regulatory Authority (BoMRA), and therefore, their use should be preceded by a comprehensive eye examination that begins with contact lens case history, evaluation of functional vision and refractive status. Bio microscopic evaluation is also needed to assess the health of the eye surface, determine compatibility, lens type, wearing time, care and compliance, in the case of past contact lens users.

It is therefore mandatory that a qualified-registered Eye Care Professional safeguards the eye health of a contact lens wearer. This is expected of them because they are trained to perform comprehensive services such as eye examination, contact lens fitting, patient training, evaluation, education on contact lens care regimen and follow-up visits as a part of contact lens aftercare.

The public is warned about the risks associated with contact lens non-compliance and usage without the supervision of a qualified Eye Care Professional. Misuse of contact lenses can cause serious sight-threatening complications such as corneal abrasions, corneal ulcers, allergic conjunctivitis and other contact lens related disease.

The supply of frames without professional guidance deviates from the best interest of the patient and their eye health. The public is advised to be vigilant against such practices and know that illegal vendors are not qualified to render eye care services. All those who are found selling eye contact lenses without being duly registered are violating the law and liable for a fine of between P5 000 and P100 000.00 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or both.

The public is therefore, urged to report all illegal marketing and sales of the above devices to BoMRA at 3620900 / 76885151 or email info@bomra.co.bw. Alternatively, they can contact the BHPC at 3931625.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Smith-Lawrence'.

Dr Pamela Smith-Lawrence

ACTING DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES