

Big business donates to fight virus

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LIFE-SAVING pills and litres of sanitising alcohol are just some of the measures big businesses contributed free yesterday to help curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Astell Pharmaceuticals said it would donate 500 000 chloroquine phosphate tablets for use by the Department of Health (DoH). This can reduce the number of days Covid-19 patients spend in hospital, and the length of time patients remain infectious.

On March 19, South Africa adopted chloroquine phosphate in its guidelines for the clinical management of Covid-19, published by the Department of Health and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

China, Belgium and South Korea have also adopted chloroquine phosphate in their Covid-19 treatment guidelines, while the drug has been recommended for use in France, Australia and the US.

Astell Pharmaceuticals, South Africa's largest black-owned pharmaceutical company, said that by reducing the time that patients remained in hospital, chloroquine phosphate could help reduce pressure on the health-care system, allowing more people to access the care they needed.