

## **IMPASSE SOLVED – FACE MASKS TO START TO BE SOLD**

An agreement has been reached whereby Pharmacy owners will be able to provide surgical disposable facemasks and face shields to the public at the price announced by the Government.

This has been made possible due to a compensation package that has been agreed. This will make up for any losses that pharmacy owners may incur due to wholesale purchases made by them at prices that would not allow them to sell at the new announced price. As such, the temporary ban on the selling of disposable surgical masks is being lifted with immediate effect.

The agreement is a result of intensive contact between Mr Paul Abela and Mr Mario Debono, the President and the Chairman of the Healthcare section on behalf of the Malta Chamber of SMEs respectively, and the Minister of the Economy, Hon Silvio Schembri.

As part of the discussions, Minister Schembri also assured the SME Chamber that there will also be a revision of the VAT rates on Personal Protective Equipment, in order to further make the price of these items lower to the general public.

It is further being noted that pharmacies are only selling items that have the correct certification.

### **ABOUT MALTA CHAMBER OF SMES**

Malta Chamber of SMEs (Formerly known as GRTU) is the largest social partner in Malta representing over 7,000 SMEs from over 90 different sectors. The SME Chamber has been established for over 70 years and its aim is of safeguarding the interest of businesses at large.

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Pharmacists and Pharmacy owners are ensuring that only products that are tested are being sold. The Chamber of SME's reminds everyone that masks are medical items and should only be sold by those having a license to do so and fall under the relevant NACE code.

The Chamber wants to make the general public aware that Pharmacies only sell items that importers supply them at the recommended retail price. A Pharmacy is beyond a normal shop, but a place where one goes for his healthcare needs. All items and mark-ups on items are tightly controlled.

The Chamber thanks Minister Schembri, and Mrs Sant Fournier of the Chamber of Pharmacists for their input in solving this impasse.

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