

The 2020 Heartbeat of Healthcare in the Middle East

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This year's 7th annual healthcare edition of Law Update looks at developments over the past year in the healthcare sector across the Middle East. Amidst the plethora of COVID-19-related legislation, one would be forgiven for thinking that nothing else has happened in the field of medicine, but this is not so. The region continues to focus on healthcare transformation. The United Arab Emirates' objective to develop medical tourism remains a key part of the healthcare strategy. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its Vision 2030 transformation plan has continued to charge forwards, with the healthcare projects' market continuing to be very active despite COVID-19. Our healthcare practice experts have been exceptionally busy supporting our clients' understanding of the COVID-19 regulations but also the broader suite of regulatory change as the region continues to expand healthcare provision and the shift to digital health.

This edition contains 16 articles covering a wide range of healthcare topics across the Middle East. In the United Arab Emirates ('UAE'), we have observed another busy period of regulatory output from the regulators, including the Ministry of Health and Prevention's executive regulations to the federal law on information communication technology in healthcare elaborating on the establishment and regulation of the central healthcare IT system (read [here](#)), a new resolution concerning the UAE medical liability law, establishing the supreme committee on medical liability (read [here](#)), as well as regulations issued at the local health authority levels. A full summary of key UAE healthcare regulatory developments can be found [here](#). The flurry of new Abu Dhabi Department of Health circulars and legislation this year included a much-anticipated new telehealth standard, to bring the same in line with the 2019 federal guidelines (read [here](#)). We also take a look at the essential real estate requirements for establishing a hospital in the UAE (read [here](#)).

With the increasing move to online content and ecommerce, we examine the regulatory framework with which social media influencers must comply in order to market, promote, or engage in commercial activity through social media networks (read [here](#)) as well as licensing requirements for selling healthcare products online (read [here](#)). The protection of pharmaceutical innovations in healthcare continues to be of paramount importance to healthcare companies in the GCC (read [here](#)), as well as fighting pharmaceutical counterfeits in the market, which have surged during the COVID-19 pandemic (read [here](#)). In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we examine what has been achieved so far and the developments made to date with regard to Vision 2030 (read [here](#)). In the Kingdom of Bahrain, we examine the public health law and ways that authorities have utilised it to combat COVID-19 (read [here](#)), and in the Sultanate of Oman we highlight the key elements of the executive regulations on the pharmacy law concerning the practice of the pharmacy profession and pharmaceutical establishments (read [here](#)). The State of Kuwait imposed new regulations this year concerning the registration of herbal medicines and teas, providing a much needed classification scheme (read [here](#)). Further, in the State of Qatar we review the key elements of the compulsory contract tracing system and its legal basis, as well as associated data protection laws (read [here](#)).

Finally, in Jordan we take a look at recent regulation concerning the licensing of pharmaceutical establishments, which has contributed to the development of an increasingly robust legislative environment for the healthcare industry (read [here](#)). We hope that you enjoy this special edition of Law Update. Al Tamimi's specialist healthcare lawyers across our 17 offices in nine jurisdictions regularly advise on legal and regulatory matters concerning the healthcare sector. For more details on our offering and how we can assist you, please contact us at healthcare@tamimi.com.