

# The Heartbeat of Healthcare in the Middle East

**Andrea Tithecott** - Partner, Head of Regulatory and Healthcare - Commercial / Regulatory / Legislative Drafting / Sustainability focused Corporate Governance / Sustainable Finance / Sustainable Business / Sustainable Sourcing / Climate Change & Energy Transition / Projects

a.tithecott@tamimi.com - Abu Dhabi



Welcome to the 6th annual healthcare edition of Law Update.

Our [Healthcare Practice](#) provides a full suite of services to the entire healthcare sector through our 17 offices in nine countries across the Middle East. We have long served as trusted advisors to an array of healthcare service providers, third-party payors, as well as in the life sciences, biotechnology, and med-tech sectors. Consequently, our highly experienced healthcare lawyers have a comprehensive view of the healthcare ecosystems across the region, whether from the perspective of regulatory trends, corporate and commercial transactions, employment and talent retention, or with regard to protecting intellectual property, privacy and security compliance, and litigation.

In this month's Law Update we take a look at healthcare regulation developments in 2019, and continue to observe the regional growth in healthcare spending, and increased focus on telehealth, digital health, and all things 'tech'.

In the United Arab Emirates ('[UAE](#)'), we have observed a busy period of regulatory output from the regulators, including the Ministry of Health and Prevention's federal law on information communication technology (see '[The Federal Law regulating the Use of Information and Communication Technology in the UAE Healthcare Sector](#)'), and executive regulations governing the interpretation of 'gross negligence' for medical malpractice (see '[Significant Developments: UAE Medical Liability Law](#)'), as well as regulations

issued at the local health authority levels. A full summary of UAE developments is in our article titled '[In Case You Missed It: Key UAE Healthcare Laws and Regulatory Developments of 2019](#)'. The flurry of new Dubai Health Authority legislation this year included a much-anticipated new telehealth standard, to supplement its 2017 law (see '[DHA Issues New Standard for Telehealth Services](#)').

In our article titled '[Development of the UAE as a Sports Injury Rehabilitation Destination and Sports Science Hub](#)', we take a look at some of the more unique projects for services delivery, where the UAE positions itself as a destination and hub for sports injury rehabilitation.

In our article titled '[Current Good Manufacturing Practices and Distribution Agreements](#)', we discuss the importance of pharmaceutical supply and distribution which remains critical for the assurance of supply of good quality medicines at an affordable cost.

In the [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](#), the regulatory re-carpet of the healthcare transformation plan continues to roll out. Our Saudi team examines a number of critical regulations, including privatisation, corporatisation, and public-private-partnership schemes in our article titled '[KSA Privatisation, Corporatisation and PPP Schemes in Healthcare](#)' and the telehealth regulations in our article titled '[The Regulation and Licensing of Telemedicine in Saudi Arabia](#)'.

In both the UAE and Saudi, we look at nationalisation strategies and their impact on the workforce (see '[Impact of Nationalisation Policies in the UAE and KSA Healthcare Sector](#)'). In light of the expected global workforce shortage looming on the horizon, this article highlights a ticking time-bomb of a problem for these powerhouses of the region, unless major efforts are made to train national citizens.

In [Bahrain](#), we return to the topic of e-health and examine the new personal data protection law and impacts on patient privacy (see '[How Does Bahrain's new Personal Data Protection Law impact Patient Privacy?](#)').

Pharmaceutical regulation and registration requirements in [Oman](#) are highlighted in our article titled '[Pharmaceutical Registration in Oman: An Overview](#)'.

The State of [Kuwait](#) is leading the way on the topic of mental health with its very first mental health law (see '[Dispelling the Taboo: Kuwait's First Mental Health Law](#)'), a subject high on the agenda of other GCC states as we see much more openness regarding the importance of mental health and overall well-being.

Meanwhile, the implementation of the first steps under [Egypt](#)'s universal health insurance law became operational during the summer, and we will continue to see this universal programme coming on-line in phases over the next 10 years for the benefit of all Egyptian national citizens (see '[Egypt: Universal Health Insurance Law](#)'). With funding support from the World Bank running into billions of dollars, this is a colossal project on which to keep an eye for all involved in the sector.

...and finally... our healthcare lawyers will be attending Arab Health in Dubai in January 2020 and have a packed schedule of events and engagements. We will send announcements and invitations shortly, and look forward to seeing all of our clients and friends there.