



A LETTER TO ALL VASCULAR SURGEONS IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

We wish to inform you that the Minister of Health, through the Council for Medical Schemes has announced some major potential changes that will have a major effect on private surgical practice within the next year. This has been done to immediately align medical funders and private practice in general with the aims of NHI which is due to be implemented in 2025 and now has the full approval of cabinet.

These announcements include:

1. **Price regulation for all medical services in the private sector** with a single across-the-board tariff. The proposal is one standard price for all health services and not just for PMBs which will largely fall away and be replaced by “baskets of care”. The announced implementation date is **April 2018**. There is no indication at this stage of what the tariff will be or the basis for determining it.
2. **The complete abolition of co-payments by patients for all medicals services.** We have been informed that healthcare providers will not be permitted to charge any co-payments after **31 January 2019**.

Surgicom in partnership with SAPPF will be addressing these challenges on behalf of all surgeons but a difficult time is envisaged.

- a. It has never been more important to be a member of Surgicom than it is now. All surgeons in private practice must now join together to maintain the viability of private practice itself. Surgicom must have the full support of all surgeons. We anticipate what is necessary being costly. It is unreasonable that only a few surgeons bear the costs of initiatives aimed to benefit all.
- b. Up-to-date practice cost studies are vital to establish the real costs of running a practice in order to demand reasonable remuneration for our services. These studies will start in August 2017 and run for 4 months. It is vital that all surgeons contribute data. If the participation is poor, the authorities will ignore the data and surgeons will be marginalised and only have themselves to blame.
- c. At the ASSA/SAGES congress next week there are four private practice sessions as well as the AGMs of both ASSA and Surgicom. All of these are of considerable importance to surgeons in private practice. We encourage all to attend.

James Tunncliffe
President of VASSA

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Chairman of Surgicom