

Discovery app lets your doctor see your health records

LAURA DU PREEZ

It's likely that doctors who treat members of medical schemes administered by Discovery Health will soon ask them for permission to access their health records held by these schemes.

Doctors who treat members of schemes administered by Discovery Health are being given free access to an application (or app), known as HealthID, that they can download to an iPad. Doctors can use HealthID to check all the claims you have submitted to your scheme for consultations with healthcare providers, as well as the results of any laboratory tests you have undergone that were processed through the scheme.

Apart from Discovery Health Medical Scheme, schemes that Discovery Health administers include Altron Medical Scheme, Anglovaal Group Medical Scheme, IBM Medical Aid Society, LA Health, Remedi Medical Scheme, Retail Medical Scheme and the University of KwaZulu-Natal Medical Scheme.

YOUR CONSENT NEEDED

Before your doctor may access your past claims information, he or she will ask you to sign a consent form. You can sign on your doctor's iPad or you can sign a printed form. If you are referred to another doctor, you will have to give that doctor consent to access your claims records on HealthID.

Once the form has been sent to Discovery Health, the administrator will send you an SMS and an email indicating which doctor has been given consent to access your claims record.

If you receive such an SMS or email and did not give your consent, you need to contact Discovery Health immediately.

If you want to withdraw the consent you gave a doctor to view your records, you can do so through Discovery Health.

Dr Jonathan Broomberg, chief executive of Discovery Health, says 1 200 doctors are currently using HealthID.

How HealthID will benefit you as a member

Discovery Health chief executive Dr Jonathan Broomberg says that giving your doctor access to your records is likely to be to your benefit, for a number of reasons:

- If you cannot remember when last you suffered from a condition, your doctor will be able to look this up on HealthID.

- If you have forgotten what medication you are taking, your doctor will be able to see what medicines have been prescribed for you and in what dosage. This will enable your doctor to know what medication has been prescribed to date for the condition for which he or she is treating you, and your doctor will also know what you may be taking for any other conditions that may affect the condition for which he or she is treating you.

Your doctor will be able to see if you have been filling your prescription regularly and this will help him or her to determine whether you have been following the recommended treatment properly.

Broomberg says patients often cannot remember the last time they suffered from a particular disease or, in the case of elderly patients, all the medication they are taking.

- Your doctor will be able to view the results of any laboratory tests, such as blood tests, you have had, which will enable him or her to assess how your condition has developed. This can prevent your doctor from sending you for duplicate tests.

Discovery is working on extending the HealthID concept to assist members of Discovery-administered schemes if they are treated by paramedics in an emergency. Members of all Discovery Health-administered schemes will in future receive stickers with a Quick Response

- Your doctor will be able to see when you were admitted to hospital, for what condition and for how long.

- Your doctor will be able to generate an electronic script, and he or she will be able to print the script and give it to you, or email it to your chosen pharmacy, or email it to MedXpress, Discovery Health's pharmacy delivery service for Discovery Health administered schemes.

- Your doctor will be able to access the costs of all medicines available, including generic alternatives, and this may assist you and your doctor in settling on an affordable treatment for your condition.

- Your doctor will quickly be able to complete online any application forms your scheme requires - for example, for a new application for chronic medication or an application to change an existing chronic medication. Your doctor will, in the case of common chronic conditions, be able to obtain approval from the scheme instantly and will be alerted to any co-payments so he or she can discuss your treatment options with you. Doctors are increasingly charging patients for the time it takes to complete the forms required by a scheme.

- Your doctor will be able to see the medical scheme option to which you belong and the benefits to which you are entitled. This may help you and your doctor to decide on the most

cost-effective treatment for you.

- Your doctor will quickly generate an electronic referral letter if he or she refers you to another practitioner and to attach all your test results to the letter. This letter can be emailed to the practitioner to whom your doctor is referring you or printed and given to you. This may avoid your having to return to your doctor's practice to collect the letter.

The referral letter system does not force your doctor to refer you to a doctor who charges at the scheme's rates, but your doctor will be able to check which options you are on and therefore which doctors charge at the scheme's rates.

- If you are a member of Discovery Health's Vitality programme and have had certain health indicators measured - for example, your body mass index or blood pressure - your doctor will also be able to see these results. Your doctor's notes on your condition will not be part of the record that is made available to other practitioners - only the information the scheme has on your past claims will be used to build your electronic health record.

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the code and access your health details, as well as details of your next of kin.

Discovery Health is also working on an app for members of the schemes it administers that will give members access to their medical records on a tablet or Smartphone.

HealthID is currently only available

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on iPad, but Discovery is developing one for Samsung and other manufacturers that use the Android operating system. Doctors who do not have iPads and who want to use the app can buy an iPad through Discovery and pay it off, interest-free, over 24 months.

To encourage doctors to use the app, Discovery Health will pay the Vodacom 3G costs they incur using HealthID. If a doctor uses HealthID for scripts, refer-rals and so on for more than half of his or her patients on schemes administered by Discovery Health and uses HealthID to submit 75 percent of chronic illness benefit forms to Discovery Discovery Health will pay the doctor R15 extra per consulta-tion in which the app was used.



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