



## **NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2016**

### **GOVERNANCE PILOT WITH DISCOVERY HAS STARTED VERY WELL**

During the first 3 months, 105 surgeons signed up for the pilot project. More than 1500 discharge summaries were completed and as a result, Discovery Health paid out over R700 000 in additional remuneration to participating surgeons. Surgicom signed up 30 new members, boosting membership figures to over 250.

**Click on the links below to download the application forms, view a 6 minute video or view a power-point presentation on how to complete the discharge summary.**

- A 5 minute video explaining the pilot project
- An article explaining why we need this project and how all surgeons can benefit
- Download the latest Surgicom Newsletter including details of obtaining consent for Health ID
- A detailed tutorial on how to complete the discharge summary and use code 0177
- View the "pathways of care" brochure for the pilot
- Download the application forms for the pilot
- Download application forms for Surgicom Membership

### **THE FIRST PILOT PROFILES ARE READY TO BE SENT TO PARTICIPATING SURGEONS**

All surgeons participating in the pilot will receive their first report within the next few weeks. The data is derived from 1 January to 31 December 2015 and focusses on the five selected procedures. This will enable participants to understand how the profile reports work, examining historical data. Reports based on data collected after the initiation of the pilot will then be sent out every six months. The information presented includes volumes of cases, patient demographics, outcome including readmission rates, length of stay and overall costs as well as a quality score and efficiency score for each of the five procedures when compared to the national benchmark. The Surgicom board believes that simply informing surgeons of how they compare to their peers in terms of outcomes, costs and efficiencies will be a powerful inducement to better practice.

The point of data sharing and the basis for the R380 payment per event is the discharge summary. This works through Health ID, either on the web or on an i-pad, but in order to access a patient's Health ID record the patient's consent is required. Surgeons are urged to request their staff to obtain this digitally whenever they register a DHMS patient. Once the initial consent at registration has been obtained it follows through to the discharge summary and all subsequent interactions with this patient. If the initial registration process, including obtaining consent was incomplete, the Health ID will reflect "Consent required" before allowing you to proceed with the discharge summary. An additional R75 is paid directly to you every time you access a patient record on Health ID for a consultation or event.

There are four ways to obtain consent:

- **I-Pad:** If you have the Health ID app on I-pad (recommended), The patient signs on the screen to give consent
- **Web:** Go to [www.discovery.co.za](http://www.discovery.co.za) and select 'HealthID Consent'
- **Discovery App for Smartphones:** Most DH patients have the DH app on their smart phone. They can select HealthID consent and nominate you as a doctor that can have access to their health record.
- **SMS:** Almost everyone can send an SMS to 31347: Consent3, patient's date of birth, doctor's individual practice number eg; Consent3, 19700726, 1543261

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## DR BHEKI DUBE JOINS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SURGICOM

We are pleased to announce that Dr Bheki Dube, a vascular surgeon from Port Elizabeth has been appointed as a director of Surgicom. Bheki is 36 years old and was born in Bulawayo Zimbabwe. He qualified as a general surgeon in 2012 and as a Vascular surgeon in 2015, winning the medal for the best candidate in the examination for the certificate in Vascular Surgery. He has an exclusive Vascular practice at Netcare Greenacres with an interest in Phlebology and Duplex directed interventions.



## SURGICOM ON TWITTER

Twitter is one of the most popular social media tools today where users can post and read short messages called "tweets." It is accessible via the internet or smartphone apps. Surgicom is on Twitter. Follow @SurgicomSA to read the most important healthcare news in South Africa. @SurgicomSA will keep you informed about Surgicom's activities, the private healthcare environment, NHI, and evolving healthcare legislation.



## **SURGICOM AT ASSA / SAGES 2017**

The **ASSA/SAGES2017** congress will be held at the **Boardwalk Conference Centre, Port Elizabeth** between **5th and 8th August 2017**.

Surgicom will conduct a 2-hour private practice session on the Tuesday morning 8th August. Focus areas will be efficient coding, group practice, multi-disciplinary co-ordinated care, waste, abuse and fraud.

There will be an in depth review of the first year of the pilot project and an opportunity for Surgicom members to raise any questions or difficulties related to private practice. As the following day is a public holiday, we encourage all surgeons to plan to attend this important session.

The **Surgicom AGM** will be held at **16h00 on Sunday 6th August 2017**.  
**Save these dates now and plan to be there!**

## **A SUPREME COURT RULING OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE**

Several medical schemes have asserted that they have a right to choose whether to pay the patient or the service provider directly. This has been used as a powerful inducement for doctors to sign provider contracts and has been used by schemes as a punitive measure against doctors. This issue has been pronounced upon by the Supreme Court of Appeals in the case of **Sechaba Medical Solutions (Pty) Ltd and others v William Sekete and others (case no: 216/2014)** in which the court decided, amongst others, that section 59(2) of the Medical Schemes Act does not afford this discretion to medical schemes. The salient portion of the judgment is *"It seems to me that when a member obtains medical services and arranges for the service provider to submit their account to the medical scheme, they are authorising the medical scheme to pay the service provider and not the member."* The Sechaba decision is extremely significant. The judgment was reiterated by the Council for Medical Schemes in a recent appeal. Medical Schemes do not have the right to elect whom they reimburse for services rendered. They are required to pay the service provider directly. Discovery Health has indicated that they view this ruling as applicable only to medical schemes that have been liquidated and have no intention of changing their payment arrangements. Surgicom and other specialist groups will be engaging further on this issue.

- **To download "State of Capture, Healthcare too" by Stephen Grobler click on the link below:**

## **REIMBURSEMENT FOR LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY**

Surgicom members continue to experience difficulties with full re-imburement for laparoscopic procedures when dealing with certain medical schemes, particularly Medihelp and GEMS. The Surgicom Board has tasked John Strachan with engaging with these schemes to resolve the difficulties. John will harness the assistance of SASES in a joint initiative which will be evidence-based and reflect best clinical practice in 2016.

## PRACTICE COST STUDIES IN 2017

Surgeons in private practice are once again being asked to justify the fees that they charge. This is implied in the Health Market Inquiry deliberations and the discussions ahead of the possible introduction of National Health Insurance. We face renewed calls for price regulation in private practice and the imposition of pre-determined tariffs. In order to answer these challenges it will be necessary to conduct proper cost-studies as the high costs of running surgical practices are the basis for the fees that we charge. The previously conducted studies are considered to be out of date. Surgicom will take a lead in initiating these studies which we anticipate will begin in 2017. Surgicom members are encouraged to participate in these. Our livelihood is at stake.



### UPDATE YOUR PROFILE ON THE SURGICOM WEBSITE

The website has been enhanced by Andre Reddy with a generous sponsorship from MSD.

Please visit [www.surgicom.co.za](http://www.surgicom.co.za) to update your membership details.

*The Surgicom Board wishes all members and their families a well-earned break over the holiday season. 2017 promises to be a particularly challenging year for surgeons in private practice.*

**Philip Matley**  
Chairman: Surgicom



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