

Dear NASA Colleagues

## **Membership of NASA/SAPPF /FCPSA**

The Executive Committee of NASA (Exco) would like to invite all South African neurologists to become members of this association. The following document provides background information and an overview of the NASA objectives and services. It also provides information on the partnership of NASA with the South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF) and the Faculty of Consulting Physicians (FCPSA), in conjunction with HealthMan and E2 Solutions, which will significantly strengthen the negotiating position of neurologists in the relevant decision-making forums.

### **1. Background**

It is proposed that, until further notice, membership of NASA will automatically include additional membership of SAPPF and FCPSA and that a single fee will be levied to cover co-membership of these three organisations. You should have received a letter recently in which the benefits of this partnership are outlined.

NASA, in its capacity as the professional association of South African neurologists, is responsible for representing and protecting the interests of its members who work in both the private and public sectors. This responsibility is becoming increasingly complicated.

Looking ahead, it is critical that NASA positions itself to effectively deal with the ever increasing challenges which neurologists, and especially those neurologists practicing in the private healthcare sector, are facing. These include emphasising the importance of private neurological practice in South Africa, the role of private neurological practice in the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI), the shortage of neurologists in our country, factors influencing income of neurologists working in the private sector and the role of medical schemes and healthcare funders, as well as other important matters such as regulatory reforms.

Although neurologists working in the private healthcare sector are currently most vulnerable to these challenges, issues facing neurologists in the public sector also require NASA's constant vigilance and attention. These include changing details relating to occupational specific dispensation, career pathing, service delivery, specialist training and so on.

The escalating costs to NASA of properly addressing these crucial issues have now become unsustainable, both in terms of NASA Executive Committee members' time and in terms financial expense. This is not only the case for NASA, but also for most professional organisations representing the smaller medical specialities and subspecialists. Following on the successful precedent set by most of those other smaller specialist/subspecialist professional bodies, NASA Exco has made a decision to partner with SAPPF, FCPSA, HealthMan and E2 Solutions. This partnership will result in dedicated, professional negotiators and lobbyists keeping up-to-date with developments in the constantly changing South African healthcare arena and representing NASA members in all the relevant decision-making bodies. Also, where necessary and appropriate, the NASA/FCPSA/SAPPF partnership will have the necessary financial muscle to protect the interests of individual NASA members and/or NASA members as a group, in the courts.

It is worth bearing in mind that, in the past, partnership between other professional medical societies and SAPPF have resulted in clear and material benefit including; for instance the setting aside of the NHRPL price code by the High Court, the substantial increases in the fees-for-service of several specialists working in private practice (for example the psychiatrists) and the establishment of new codes that have enhanced private practice revenue, to name just a few.

**2. The immediate projects of NASA and the NASA/SAPPF/FCPSA partnership will focus on the following:**

- a) Increasing the profile and awareness of NASA representation in the South African health care policy making arena; especially with funders, the Department of Health, and the Health Professions' Council of South Africa (HPCSA).
- b) Strengthening representation of those NASA members working in private practice on all relevant policy-making bodies.
- c) Where necessary, representing and protecting the interests of those NASA members working in the Public Sector.
- d) NASA together with SAPPF and FCPSA, as well as numerous other specialist management companies, are committed to continuing the battle to establish a cost-based recommended price list (RPL) for specialist services
- e) NASA intends to review the existing coding structure of neurology fees-for-services, which are currently published by SAMA and make recommendations through SAPPF to ensure that coding is in line with the current scope of practice of neurology in South Africa. SAPPF will review and update the coding system for incorporation into a new coding system for South Africa. This project will be done in conjunction with SACHI (South African Classification of Healthcare Interventions).
- f) NASA together with SAPPF, FCPSA and other management companies will oppose any attempt to reduce the value of prescribed minimum benefits (PMB's) to a scheme rate and not the doctor's invoice value.
- g) NASA will endeavour to work closely with medical schemes on all matters pertaining to our speciality. To this end, consolidation of claims data will be required in order to negotiate fair and equitable coding and reimbursement models with Medical Schemes and Department of Health.
- h) SAPPF and FCPSA will assist with ongoing discussion and negotiation of Benefit Design with the various medical schemes and managed care organisations, which function will be co-ordinated by the NASA Executive.
- i) HealthMan will assist individual NASA members when responding to any forensic reviews that may be carried out by medical schemes.
- j) SAPPF and FCPSA will assist NASA in improving communications and website offerings dealing with neurological private practice issues through the NASA website.
- k) A comprehensive range of administrative and other private practice advisory services will be available to NASA through the offices of HealthMan.

**3. In addition to the projects listed above, the following significant value add services are available at no additional costs, except if stated so and are part of the monthly membership fee:**

- a) Free online **SMS** service for patient communications.
- b) HealthMan has an agreement with ABSA bank for reduced rates on credit card terminals in your practice. Please contact the NASA offices at 011 340 9000 for further information.
- c) Medical Malpractice Insurance through negotiations with HealthMan. An immediate saving on MPS tariffs. Enquire by e-mailing Casper Venter at [casper@healthman.co.za](mailto:casper@healthman.co.za). Insurance placed through Aon South Africa or EthiQal.
- d) **PSG** will review and advise on employee benefits, personal investments, life and key man policies.
- e) **PPS** reviews and analysis by a PSG consultant. Note that changes to PPS structures, requires that your portfolios be reviewed.
- f) Online access to obtain **CPD** points, as well as online access to view your CPD points
- g) **Practice advisory services** to assist with medical schemes problems, i.e., non-payment, reversals, PMB's etc., through the HealthMan office.

- h) **Helpdesk** to assist with general medical schemes queries
- i) Online access to various medical **journals**
- j) Various **consulting services** through HealthMan.
- k) Receipt of regular communications relevant to the healthcare industry.

#### 4. The NASA business model:

- a) NASA will employ the services of two existing organisations, **HealthMan (Pty) Ltd** and **E2 Solutions (Pty) Ltd**, on a contractual basis to advise on and manage all routine operational tasks, as well as to provide NASA with additional services from time to time as required.
- b) The Board of Directors of NASA comprise practising specialists, who have been nominated and duly elected.
- c) The Board out-sources all operational issues at a predetermined cost; these costs are fixed for twelve months and are re-negotiated on an annual basis. This cost is at a substantial discount to a competitor in the market with a superior service offering to that of the competitor.
- d) The advantage of this business model is that these groups operate as a 'virtual' organisation with limited costs in terms of staff, premises or equipment.
- e) An annual general meeting is held during one of the Society conferences.

#### 5. Internal Communication:

- a) Communication will be via email, fax, sms messages and via postings on the myNASA website.
- b) Members will receive one HealthView newsletter updating them on industry news on a monthly basis. The Private Practice Review newsletter will regularly update them on news pertaining to their practice, i.e. codes, legislation, tariffs, etc.
- c) Member meetings will be held on request from the various regions, at which meetings matters of importance to private practice will be discussed.

#### 6. HealthMan Client Base:

HealthMan has been consulting to Private Practice for the past 22 years and their clients include:

- Clinical Psychology Forum (CPF)
- ENT Society and Management Group (ENTMG)
- Faculty of Consulting Physicians of SA (FCPSA)
- General Practitioner Management Group Ltd (GPMG)
- Gynaecology Management Group Ltd (GMG)
- Iso Leso Optics Ltd (Iso Leso)
- Ophthalmology Management Group Ltd (OMG) & OSSA
- Paediatrician Management Group Ltd (PMG)
- Psychiatry Management Group Ltd (PsychMG)
- South African Audiology Association (SAAA)
- Society of Neurosurgeons of South Africa (SNSA)
- South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF)
- South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP)
- South African Society of Psychiatrists (SASOP)
- SORSA (Radiography)
- South African Audiology Association (SAAA)
- South African Rheumatism & Arthritis Association (SARAA)
- Surgicom Ltd

## 7. **Membership to NASA**

Membership to NASA will include co-membership to the FCPSA and SAPPF, for which co-membership no additional fees will be due by the member of NASA.

## 8. **Faculty of Consulting Physicians (FCPSA)**

The Faculty of Consulting Physicians of South Africa (FCPSA) is a non-profit company managed by various specialists (Endocrinologists, Nephrologists, Neurologists, Physicians, Pulmonologists and Rheumatologists) for the benefit of our various specialities. The website address is the same as for FCPSA, i.e. [www.physican.co.za](http://www.physican.co.za). FCPSA is not in competition with the other societies; but works with them on matters related to our various specialities in private practice. FCPSA was established in 2007 and has been functional to the benefit of our various specialists for a number of years.

## 9. **South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF)**

The South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF) is a non-profit body constituted to uphold and promote the practice and professional interests of medical specialists in the South African private healthcare sector. SAPPF represents more than 2,500 practitioners from most specialised medical disciplines including, but not limited to, the specialist physicians, nephrologists, endocrinologists, rheumatologists, paediatricians, general surgeons, ENT surgeons, psychiatrists, respiratory physicians, and hepatologists.

SAPPF is the preferred voice of private practice in South Africa for most specialists and has been an active stakeholder in the debates and negotiations pertinent to legislative and regulatory interventions into healthcare.

SAPPF and SAMA have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, in which it was agreed to work together on matters relating to private practice and the update of the South African doctor's coding.

## 10. **South African Coding System**

The SAPPF is in the process of drafting a new National Procedural Coding Structure of international standards. It is important that the Medical Profession determines its scope of practice and therefore remain in control of any changes to the current coding system or any proposed new system. The ICD10PCS proposed by DoH is not appropriate for South Africa and is not in use anywhere else in the world.

If you are a neurologist practicing in South Africa and you have not yet joined NASA, our executive committee urges you to do so. The Exco is firmly of the opinion that the material benefits of membership of NASA and its partners SAPPF, FCPSA, Healthman and E2 Solutions are well worth costs in terms of membership fees.

Kindly complete the membership application and ACB (debit order) authorisation forms and email to [hillary@healthman.co.za](mailto:hillary@healthman.co.za). Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely

**Dr Patty Francis**  
**President: NASA**