



THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Statement of Issues

The Health Market Inquiry into Private Healthcare

PUBLIC HEARINGS: SET 1

1. SAMA's Role in the Private Healthcare Industry

In this segment, we intend to deal with the following subjects:

- SAMA being the largest representative body of medical practitioners.
- Operates both in private and public sectors.
- Procedural Coding structure administered for the medical profession.

2. Procedural Coding Structure

We will provide information regarding the SAMA procedural coding structure laying emphasis on the following:

- SAMA is the natural authority on procedural coding and has been for 70 years.
- Procedural coding is an internationally accepted norm, providing a universal language which efficiently transmits information between various sectors of the industry.
- SAMA provides this service in the interests of the profession directly, but indirectly this benefits the larger community.
- The procedural coding structure is objective, scientifically based, peer reviewed and monitored
- SAMA makes the structure freely available to statutory bodies in the healthcare sector and derives no profit from the procedural coding structure.
- We will dispel the myth regarding the link between procedural coding and price/fee determination

3. SAMA's Advocacy Role for the profession

We will submit information regarding the following:

- Acknowledging the dire scarcity of skills through the country, we advocate for greater intake and qualification of medical practitioners.
- Through its subsidiary, the Foundation for Professional Development, providing high quality education and continuing professional development to medical practitioners for their benefit and the benefit of the community at large.

4. Relationship and co-operation with Regulators – Public Sector

- SAMA is actively involved with Regulators in both the private and public sectors. Regular interactions with the Director General of Health, as well as with the Health Professions Council occur.
- SAMA structures are actively involved in the NHI pilot site project.

5. Healthcare Expenditure

- SAMA cannot and does not participate in the determination of prices or fees for professional services in the private healthcare sector.
- It remains committed to an affordable private healthcare sector, but that affordability cannot come at the expense of sustainability.

6. Interrelationships between Medical Practitioners and Medical Schemes /Private Hospital Groups

- We will deal with the difficulties created by “Preferred Provider Contracts” between practitioners and medical schemes. These contracts may impede quality healthcare and even act as a barrier to access.
- SAMA will deal with the problematic relationship between medical specialists and private hospital groups, which relationship may have the effect of lessening competition and thereby impacting on the public’s choice and access to private healthcare.

7. Scarcity of Skills

- SAMA will discuss the dire scarcity of skills in the medical professional field.
- We will further deal with the aspect of the Certificate of Need and show that this does not provide any solution to the scarcity of professional skills.