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PRESS RELEASE

Reduced availability of Healthcare Professionals to Treat PSEMAS Patients

The new PSEMAS Terms and Conditions will become effective on 1 April 2018. All private sector healthcare providers who intend to treat PSEMAS patients, and claim directly from PSEMAS, must renew their contracts with PSEMAS by that date. The tariffs payable by PSEMAS remain the NAMAF 2014 Benchmark Tariffs.

To register with PSEMAS, healthcare providers must provide documents from, amongst others, Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), the Health Professions Council of Namibia (HPCNA), the Namibia Association of Medical Aid Funds (NAMAF), the Namibian Medicines Regulatory Council (NMRC), the Receiver of Revenue (RoR) and the Social Security Commission (SSC).

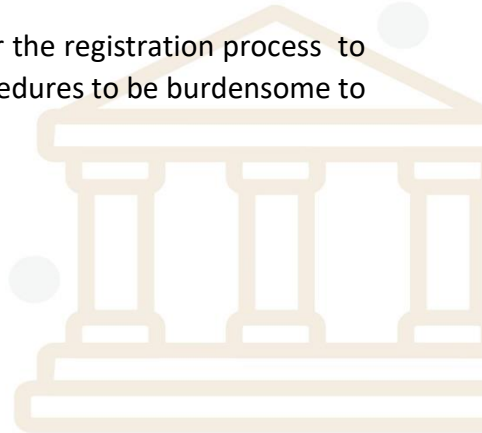
The Namibia Private Practitioners Forum (NPPF), in collaboration with the Namibia Dental Association (NDA) and the Medical Association of Namibia (MAN) conducted an extensive survey amongst healthcare providers in private practice.

In total 308 respondents completed the survey. 87% believed the tariffs paid by PSEMAS are insufficient to sustain a healthcare practice.

Three years ago, 10% of healthcare providers elected not to contract with PSEMAS. Currently 17% of healthcare providers are not contracted with PSEMAS, 21% will elect not to contract with PSEMAS as from 1 April 2018, and by 2019, 25% intend not to contract with PSEMAS.

Of those healthcare providers who are currently contracted with PSEMAS, 29% have decided to purposefully reduce their services to PSEMAS patients over the past three years.

In rating their experience with PSEMAS, 79% of healthcare providers consider the registration process to be burdensome to prohibitively burdensome, and 76% regard the claims procedures to be burdensome to prohibitively burdensome.



In rating the efficiency of the different agencies involved to obtain the documentation required by PSEMAS, the Namibian Medicines and Regulatory Council (NMRC) is ranked as the most inefficient agency, with 38% of respondents stating that NMRC is inefficient to extremely inefficient. This is followed by MOHSS (33%), NAMAFA (29%), the Receiver of Revenue (29%) and SSC (22%). The Health Professions Council of Namibia (HPCNA), the umbrella regulator of healthcare providers, is regarded as the most efficient agency, with 77% of respondents stating that the HPCNA is efficient to extremely efficient.

Healthcare providers are becoming increasingly concerned when deciding to contract with PSEMAS. The major concern is the unsustainable tariffs paid by PSEMAS, coupled with the experience of last year, when government failed to pay service providers for many months, placing many practices under extreme financial pressure. Increasing registration and claims requirements and the newly introduced continuous tax certificates and annual renewal requirements may well see a substantial decrease in healthcare providers willing to serve PSEMAS patients. Matters are made worse by the inefficiency of government agencies.

Healthcare providers provide services to government employees and their families at tariffs set by the medical aid fund industry more than four years ago, without proper consideration of the input costs to provide private healthcare services. If these tariffs are not significantly adjusted very soon, there will likely be a substantial decrease in the availability of healthcare providers for PSEMAS patients, possibly to the point where these patients will have to rely on the public healthcare system for treatment.

Editors notes. The survey was conducted by independent experts from Survey Warehouse. For more information you can contact Eben de Klerk at 0811222181 or eben@isgnamibia.com