

Media Statement

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For immediate release

HPCSA's position on global fees: practitioners urged not to sign agreements that may violate ethical rules

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has noted concerns expressed by healthcare professionals in relation to global fee and similar arrangements by medical schemes. These concerns relate to the protection of patient rights and limitations on professional autonomy, to be able to act in the best interest of patients.

The HPCSA wishes to remind healthcare professionals that funding models, and agreements entered into by healthcare professionals, should always be ethical, compliant with the law and clinically sound.

Professionals should ensure that they retain their professional autonomy and that there is no risk- or incentive of over- or under-servicing.

Furthermore, it appears that there is a risk of contravention of some of the ethical rules of the HPCSA in such agreements, its implementation and/or its application to patient care and professional autonomy.

Due to the importance of ensuring cost-effective care, but doing so in a manner that protects patients and ensures appropriateness of care, the HPCSA will host roadshows to engage with healthcare professionals on these matters, to canvass experiences and views and chart a way forward. The HPCSA will also engage with the Ministry- and National Department of Health, as well as the Council for Medical Schemes and other stakeholders on this important matter.

In the light of the above, the HPCSA urge healthcare professionals to defer entering into global fee or similar financial- and clinical arrangements or contracts.

Once all aspects relating to the law, ethics, clinical autonomy and funding mechanisms have been properly canvassed with all stakeholders, guidance will be provided.

In the meantime, however, practitioners are urged to adhere to the current ethical rules and the policies of the HPCSA.

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About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) is a statutory body established in terms of the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974. The HPCSA is committed to protecting the public and guiding the professions and the mission of the HPCSA is quality and equitable healthcare for all.

Council is mandated to regulate the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to education, training and registration, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring continuing Professional Development (CPD), and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

In order to safeguard the public and indirectly the professions, registration in terms of the Act is a prerequisite for practising any of the health professions registrable with Council.

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