1 July 2016

Dear Colleague

SURGICOM MEMBERSHIP

This letter provides an outline of what Surgicom is and the services that our members enjoy:

1. **Background:**

   Surgicom was established as the business arm of ASSA in 1996 to manage strategic private practice matters for General Surgeons. Surgicom is a public company owned and managed by General Surgeons.

   Private practice is currently under threat in South Africa. Of particular concern are the dogged efforts by HPCSA to promulgate a set of ethical tariffs that regulate the maximum fees that may be charged, the inquiry into private healthcare by the Competition Commission, and the future shape of NHI. We need a strong management organization to represent the interests of surgeons in dealing with these challenges. Surgicom is determined to provide this service.

   In order to remain relevant and increase its effectiveness, Surgicom needs to have the vast majority of practicing surgeons as paid-up members. It behoves all surgeons to be members of ASSA and the various specialty societies. It is unreasonable that all benefit whilst only some contribute. We urge all existing members to continue to support us and encourage other surgeons, particularly the younger members to join without delay. Without increased membership support, Surgicom does not have a viable future.

2. **The Surgicom Board of Directors**

   The Board of Directors is made up of Surgeons that have been duly nominated and elected. They have been selected because of their proven track-record in surgical leadership in this country as well as displaying good business acumen.

   The current Board comprises:
   - Dr Philip Matley, Western Cape: Chairperson
   - Dr Mike Wellsted, Gauteng: Deputy Chairperson
   - Dr Stephen Grobler, Free State: Consultant
   - Dr Dean Lutrin, Gauteng: Director
   - Prof Sats Pillay, Eastern Cape: Director
   - Dr Suresh Raidoo, KZN: Director
   - Dr Jose Ramos, Gauteng: Director
   - Dr Andre Reddy, KZN: Director
   - Dr John Strachan, KZN: Director

*Directors:* Dr PJ Matley (Chairman), Dr DL Lutrin, Prof SS Pillay, Prof JM Ramos, Dr SN Raidoo, Dr ADR Reddy, Dr JC Strachan, Dr MD Wellsted

*ASSA Representative:* MJ Klipin, Consultant: Dr SP Grobler
The Board recently restructured Surgicom to be compliant with the new Companies Act and to enjoy benefits of less costly internal financial reviews. The Board out-sources various operational issues based on service agreements and at predetermined costs.

3. **Surgicom and Healthman**

Secretarial and financial management services are provided for Surgicom by Health Management and Networking Services (Pty) Ltd (HealthMan) and a related company, e2 Solutions (Pty) Ltd. HealthMan is a privately owned healthcare consultancy specialising in the management and administration of specialist and healthcare networks. Their focus on promoting the professional and commercial interests of both specialist networks and healthcare practitioners, coupled with their extensive industry experience, quality service and industry contacts, make them the preferred choice in healthcare consulting.

HealthMan has focused exclusively on consulting to private practice since inception in 1996. Areas of expertise include network administration, legal support, healthcare research, financial modelling and the development of tariff schedules. HealthMan consultants play pivotal communication, representation and negotiation roles in their relations with key healthcare industry stakeholders: Networks, Funders (i.e. Medical Schemes and Managed Healthcare Organizations), Professional Associations, Hospitals, Pharmaceutical Companies and Suppliers. HealthMan was also responsible for NHRPL 2009 submissions for virtually all SAMA disciplines and has done most of the research work and support for the various legal challenges that have happened or are in progress.

Healthman’s client base includes the ENT, Ophthalmology, Paediatric, Psychiatry, Gynaecology and General Practitioner management groups as well as the Faculty of Consulting Physicians of SA (FCPSA), the Society of Neurosurgeons of SA, the Namibian Private Practitioners Forum and SAPPF. Healthman also represents various para-medical groups including the Clinical Psychology Forum, the Society of Radiographers of SA, the SA Society of Physiotherapy, the SA Rheumatism and Arthritis Association, the SA Speech Therapy & Audiology Association, ER24 and Netcare 911.

The HealthMan Management Team supporting Surgicom comprises:

- Casper Venter: Director, Funder Relations and Projects
- Mardi Roos: Director, National Networks & Operations
- Peet Kotze: Finance and Data
- Joey Hanekom: Website and Communications
- Hillary Finnegan: Support with Medihelp CPT & Discovery Governance Project
- Dalene Jordaan: Support with Medical Scheme Queries

4. **SURGICOM, SAMA & SAPPF**

Surgicom recognizes that one of its primary functions is to represent the private practice aspirations of members of the Association of Surgeons, who in turn are a sub-group of SAMA. We will continue to work with the Specialist Private Practice Committee (SPPC) of SAMA but also support SAPPF in their sterling efforts on behalf of private practice in this country. Their effectiveness is beyond question. The Surgicom board has taken up full membership of SAPPF in January 2014 and since then, Surgicom members are automatically full members of SAPPF. SAPPF has a proven track record in dealing with the challenges we face, including skillful handling of three successful legal actions in respect of the RPL, PMBs and HPCSA’s initial attempt to determine tariffs.
5. **WHAT DOES SURGICOM DO FOR SURGEONS?**

1. Surgicom strengthens the mutual organization of all surgeons who do any form of private practice, and through its associations with SAMA and SAPPF, enables surgeons to have a say in their destiny. We have successfully defended our interests against formidable structural opposition both around the negotiating table and in the courts. All surgeons have benefitted considerably. It is unfortunate that not all have contributed by becoming Surgicom members. Going forward it is unthinkable that surgeons can face an uncertain future without sticking together as part of an efficient cohesive organization. Surgicom is that organization.

2. Surgicom provides a comprehensive range of advisory services through the HealthMan office and the Surgicom helpdesk – surgicom@healthman.co.za. These include assistance with unresolved practice related queries, e.g. medical scheme problems, non-payment of PMB’s, rejections of accounts or specific codes, reversals of payments and management of account problems and forensic audits.

3. Surgicom provides an informative and interactive website and will now provide a regular newsletter. Visit the website on www.surgicom.co.za to access:

   - free online SMS service for patient communication
   - online access to manage your CPD points

4. Surgicom facilitates the consolidation of surgical claims data to negotiate coding and tariffs with Medical Schemes and the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

5. Surgicom assists with procedural coding (new procedures, unit values, SAMA and CPT coding, billing rules, ICD codes, PMB references) as well as billing policies, creditor policies and legal requirements. We are committed to participation in the new SACHI initiative. We continue to update relevant coding and meet regularly with the relevant funders and their administrators.

6. Surgicom engages with the Department of Health, BHF, CMS, SAMA, HPCSA and the devices and pharmaceutical industry.

7. Surgicom provides various commercial offerings such as credit card terminals, asset finance, PPS reviews and CPD point logging through the assistance of HealthMan and the Surgicom website.

8. Surgicom, through the helpdesk, assists members with queries and complaints relating to the Consumer Protection Act and other areas of legislation as well as providing support and assistance to members who have been the focus of forensic audits and enquiries.

9. Surgicom, through HealthMan, has an agreement with ABSA bank entitling members to a better rate on credit card transactions. The merchant rate is 2,1% (VAT excl.) on credit cards and 0.86% (VAT excl.) on debit cards. Monthly rental is R250 per month (VAT incl.) and Installation and Training fee is R525 (VAT incl.).

10. Surgicom members receive regular communications from HealthMan including their highly valued Private Practice Review as well as the annual Salary Review.
6. **CODING**

Surgicom is actively involved in all the coding and tariff bodies. We support CPT as a model for future coding structures. Our experience with the Medihelp - CPT contract places Surgicom as an important repository of CPT coding expertise. The SAPPF and SAMA are in the process of drafting a new National Procedural Coding Structure and joined the Private Health Informatics Standards Committee (PHISC) to set the standards of the new coding structure. The South African Classification of Healthcare Interventions (SACHI) is a multiparty organisation that will manage modernisation of coding in South Africa. The SACHI proposals were presented to stakeholders at a meeting hosted by the SAPPF on 12 July 2013 and were accepted by all present. We believe that these proposals are a realistic alternative to the HPCSA attempts to interfere in coding and tariffs. The SAPPF Board resolutely committed funds to start the new coding project. SAPPF and SAMA are co-operating closely and the expectation is that this will be a joint SAPPF/SAMA initiative.

7. **Communication:**

Communication will be via email and the Surgicom website, with limited communication via sms, fax and post. Members receive a HealthView newsletter updating them on industry news on a monthly basis. Surgicom newsletters will be sent regularly. A Private Practice Review newsletter will regularly update news pertaining to practice i.e. codes, legislation, tariffs, etc. Member meetings will be convened from time to time in the various regions at which matters of importance to private practice will be discussed.

8. **Membership fee and joining Surgicom:**

The monthly fee for Surgicom for members in full time private practice is R710 per month (VAT inclusive) and for members in the public sector with limited private practice, as well as members, who have recently started private practice, the fee is R260 per month (VAT inclusive). Registrars can join Surgicom at the minimal fee of RX per annum.

All surgeons that do private work are earnestly urged to join Surgicom. We thank the 220 General Surgeons who have already joined and supported Surgicom in the past.

If you have not yet joined Surgicom, kindly complete the membership application and ACB (debit order) authorisation forms and fax back to 011 782 0270.

We trust that this document clarifies the roles played by the various professional organisations that look after your interests in an ever changing healthcare environment.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

**PHILIP MATLEY**

**CHAIRPERSON: SURGICOM**