

## PsySSA provides feedback following the medical aid survey completed by members during December 2015...



## PsySSA Medical Aid Survey

Last December the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) conducted a survey amongst members to determine if any were experiencing difficulties with medical aid claims. A total of 125 members responded to the survey. Most respondents were from Gauteng (50%) followed by the Western Cape (17.7%) and KZN (14.5%). The majority of the respondents were registered as Educational Psychologists (42.4%) followed by Clinical Psychologists (30.4%) and Counselling Psychologists (21.6%). Respondents ranged in experience from one to 30+ years in practice.

A number of medical aids were listed as not paying certain claims, but Polmed (25.6%) was reported by the majority of the respondents as not paying Educational and Counselling Psychologists in certain instances. Discovery and CAMAF (14.2%) were the other two medical aids reported as being problematic with settling claims.

An examination of qualitative responses revealed that with Polmed it was clearly a case of the communication from October 2015 being actioned. In October 2015, Polmed issued a communication to Educational and Counselling psychologists indicating that they would no longer be reimbursed by the medical aid.

Some of the qualitative responses were linked to Discovery's communication re: in-hospital treatment by psychologists. The CAMAF-related responses to the survey were unclear and PsySSA is attempting to follow up on why claims are being rejected by CAMAF. All other medical aids were reported by between one and 10 respondents (less than 8% of the sample) with very little consistency across the various schemes.

Three issues were clearly evident from the responses:

1. Psychologists experience difficulty in using the codes required by medical aid billing systems. This is linked to issues on the side of medical aids (eg. codes that were previously paid for one client are not being paid for another from the same medical aid) but also to the individual psychologist who was not familiar enough with codes and billing and made mistakes in billing resulting in rejection of claims.
2. The code system for psychological consultations is very limiting and might need to be re-visited.
3. Medical aids provide very little annual cover for psychological consultations in comparison to other medical cover.

PsySSA is using the survey results to engage further with medical aids. PsySSA met with Discovery in December 2015 and will again meet with them in March 2016. Meetings with the other schemes are being arranged and members will be updated. Both the rejection of claims as well as the inconsistencies in interpreting codes will be addressed in these meetings. The annual cover provided for psychological care as well as the claims for assessment and therapy will also be discussed.

PsySSA is also engaging with the Professional Board for Psychology at the HPCSA on the issue of medical aids.

PsySSA is currently searching for a competitive package for PsySSA members that will provide an efficient and effective electronic practice management solution.

The Practice Management workshop at the PsySSA Congress will focus on discussing issues of billing, claiming and codes to assist psychologists in making sense of the systems currently being used.

PsySSA would like to take this opportunity to thank members who have provided feedback on the survey.