

Health Professionals Reference Group

May 2024

Dear Chair,

Discovery Health's Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA) processes

We write to you as Chairperson and Facilitator to the Health Professional's Reference Group (HPRG), a forum set up between Discovery Health and several professional societies in response to the issues arising from the Section 59 Inquiry into forensic processes relating to Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA). The HPRG's main purpose is to provide advice and to continuously review, develop, and redesign DH's forensic processes to enhance their rigor, credibility and effectiveness.

FWA processes ideally should be collaborative, benefitting as they do the vast majority of ethical health professionals and patients in the healthcare system. However, these processes are by their nature susceptible to contestation and are potentially conflictual, and this sometimes inhibits the prospect of consensus-based outcomes in engagements between medical schemes and healthcare practitioners in matters related to FWA. Discovery Health made extensive presentations showing how the company continues to enhance its FWA processes to ensure fair criteria to trigger investigations, and ensure that the process to conduct investigations is fair and results in credible outcomes.

A key improvement initiated through the HPRG process is the establishment by Discovery Health of a panel of dispute prevention and resolution practitioners whose services can be called upon to assist in managing engagement between it and healthcare practitioners.

The panel comprises seven persons who are third party neutrals with impeccable ethical credentials. They are all professionally qualified and accredited in facilitation, mediation and/or arbitration.

Facilitation is a very useful tool to prevent disputes from arising and to promote successful consensus seeking. Facilitators create a safe space for authentic engagement where healthy information sharing and parties' interests rather than rigid positions are promoted and managed to provide a pathway to agreement.

Where parties have deadlocked on an issue, facilitators can employ a range of techniques and problem-solving processes to assist parties to resolve disputes.

All processes are entirely voluntary in their initiation and continuation. In general, they are estimated to last for a maximum period of three hours. The panellist fee is set at R3000 (three thousand Rand) per hour and will be split on a 60/40 basis between Discovery Health and the healthcare professional. Panelists will be appointed from a roster subject to the parties exercising the right to agree to a panelist of their choice.

We encourage you to inform your members of the availability of this process which can be accessed at any stage of a forensic investigation initiated by Discovery Health to address any contentious matter that may arise in the course of such investigation. For more information about this process your members can contact Discovery Health by sending an email to FWA_escalations@discovery.co.za

Yours sincerely

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