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Circular 52 of 2019: National Beneficiary Registry Pilot Program

The Council for Medical Schemes (CMS) has been tasked by the Minister of Health to establish a central repository containing all funded (medical scheme) patients in South Africa. This registry, called the National Beneficiary Registry (NBR), will benefit the CMS and the medical schemes industry in the following ways:

- Membership history will be preserved as one Beneficiary ID number will be allocated to a member for life. This Beneficiary ID number is computed using a variable amount of data about the member, thereby creating a unique identifier for every beneficiary.
- Verification of membership status of patients that have medical aid cover, visiting state facilities.
- Demographic reporting which will aid in health planning.
- Improved and direct communication with members.
- Data verification and quality improvement by schemes and administrators.
- Monitoring of membership behavior over time.
- Future linkage to the NHI Health Patient Registration System (HPRS).

The CMS and the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) concluded a pilot study which proved to be extremely successful and beneficial as such, the CMS wishes to invite other medical schemes to participate in a similar pilot. As discussed at the Information Technology Advisory Group (ITAG) held on 10 June 2019, the following process must be followed should schemes be interested in participating:

Enrolment on the pilot program

- The medical scheme and CMS will sign a [Non-Disclosure Agreement \(NDA\)](#) together with a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) prior to the exchange of data. The NDA and MOU, are drafts and can be modified by the schemes' Board and/or Legal advisors, and once acceptable, can be forwarded to br@medicalschemes.com. The CMS will engage its legal advisors and the final documents will be signed by CMS and sent to the medical scheme for signing via the electronic signing process.

- The medical scheme can use their existing Annual Utilisation Return Data Officer for the beneficiary data submissions, or appoint a new Data Officer, please [click here](#) to complete the form.

Beneficiary data, pilot submission process

- CMS has setup a [Secure File Transfer Protocol \(SFTP\)](#) server for the safe exchange of data.
- Usernames and passwords for the SFTP server will be securely delivered to the enrolled Data Officers using two factor authentication.
- The Data Officer should prepare the beneficiary data in the format of the specification provided [Data Specification](#),
- The prepared file must be of type csv and the data must be pipe delimited "|".
- The Data Officer should upload the prepared file onto the [CMS SFTP server](#).
- Once uploaded the file will go through a series of validation checks, and the schemes' error reports will be available to the data officer on the [portal](#).
- The data must be fixed and re-uploaded, until no errors exist.

Project Plan of the pilot process

- The enrolment of the medical scheme onto the pilot program takes place from today until 31 August 2019.
- The medical scheme is expected to send CMS its first data dump between 1 August 2019 and 31 October 2019.
 - This data dump file should consist of 10 000 beneficiaries.
 - In collaboration with medical schemes, the CMS will work with the 10 000-line file to test and improve on the data quality.
 - When the CMS sends error files to the scheme for data correction, schemes are to ensure that the dataset that is corrected and sent back to CMS, is the same 10 000-line dataset initially used.
- The second data dump period is between 1 November 2019 and 29 February 2020
 - This data dump file should consist of all beneficiaries.
 - It should be in the closest format as stipulated in the data specification.

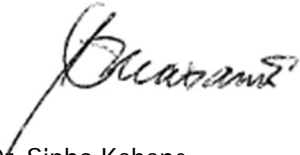
With the experience and lessons from the 10 000-line data dump between the medical scheme and CMS, it is expected that error files will be minimal.

Security of data

As discussed at ITAG the data will be secured in the following manner:

Data in transit will be over Hyper Text Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS), which is a protocol that is used to secure the communication between two parties. The data at rest will be encrypted and stored in a database.

We look forward to medical schemes enrolling onto the pilot program as early as possible as we believe it would benefit those who participate when the system eventually goes live.



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