

Dear Healthcare Professional

Discovery Health Spinal Conservative Care Programme 2022

Persistent spinal pain is one of the most prevalent medical complaints across all Discovery Health administered medical schemes. Discovery Health Medical Scheme has seen an increase of 8% in spinal surgeries over the past four years, with costs far exceeding R1 billion a year.

Conservative care for high risk spinal surgery patients

An analysis of the claims experience revealed that when procedures are performed in more focused surgical centres supported by experienced multidisciplinary teams, there are fewer complications and readmissions. In addition, sub-optimal outcomes occur when appropriate cases are not referred to a high-quality conservative care programme.

We introduced the Spinal Care Programme in 2021 together with the Spinal Surgery Network and the Conservative Care Network. In 2022, this programme will continue to support the appropriate management of members who are at high risk of spinal surgery for persistent back or neck pain.

Eligibility criteria for the Spinal Conservative Care Programme

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme is available to members on all Discovery Health Medical Scheme plans, except the Essential Smart Plan and the KeyCare plans. For a full list of participating schemes administered by Discovery Health, please refer to annexure B of this letter. It is also available on certain schemes administered by Discovery Health.

Members who meet the clinical entry criteria will qualify for the Conservative Care Programme in one of two ways:

- We will identify eligible members through clinical protocols as having severe and ongoing spinal pain and provide them with information on the programme.
- They are identified and referred by a participating spinal surgeon after following the appropriate primary care referral pathway.

Eligible members will have access to the Spinal Conservative Care Programme **once** a year.

Exclusion criteria

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme excludes:

- Members who have had any spinal surgery in the preceding 24 months
- Emergencies, oncology, congenital and trauma-related injuries. We will continue to pay for these according to existing plan benefits.

Key features of the Spinal Conservative Care Programme

- The Spinal Care Programme covers treatment in the Spinal Conservative Care Network. The Network includes physiotherapists and chiropractors who are expertly trained in the management of back pain.
- Patients referred to the programme by a Spinal Conservative Care Network surgeon will be overseen and supported by the referring specialist surgeon where required.

Key requirements for joining the Spinal Conservative Care Network

Only suitably skilled chiropractors and physiotherapists may join the Spinal Conservative Care Network as defined by their relevant societies. We consulted with industry stakeholders to advise on the minimum criteria for provider eligibility.

Qualifying network criteria:

1. You must be a member or associate/affiliate member of one of the following recognised associations or representative groups:
 - Chiropractic Association of South Africa (CASA)
 - South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP)
 - Physiotherapy Association of South Africa (PASA)
 - South African Spine Society (SASS)
 - iZandla Consulting
2. You must have a minimum of two years' experience in private practice.
3. 50% of your practice must be focused on musculoskeletal conditions.
4. You must have completed some additional training in spinal-related care as prescribed by your relevant chosen association or society. Please see Annexure A for association, society or representative group specific criteria.

Your practice may also be nominated to join the Spinal Conservative Care Network via a network spinal surgeon, as part of the multidisciplinary care team. You must still meet the above criteria to join the network.

How the Spinal Conservative Care Programme works

The Spinal Conservative Care Programme is an additional benefit available to a select group of members at high risk for spinal surgery. It does not replace their allied, therapeutic and psychology benefits.

Once a member has been identified as eligible for the Spinal Conservative Care Programme as described above and consults with a healthcare professional on the Spinal Conservative Care Network, the following will apply:

- An episode fee is paid for each eligible member for the duration of the programme.
- This fee is paid in three separate instalments during the member's conservative care journey. Participating allied healthcare professionals will be able to submit claims once a conservative care report is captured on HealthID (our secure digital interaction platform) at each of the following three intervals:
 1. Evaluation – first consultation
 2. Midway progress – between consultations three and six
 3. Discharge and completion of programme.
- The following reimbursement codes must be used to claim for the programme:

Code	Rate
ASCP1 after the initial evaluation	R1 563.00
ASCP2 at the midway progress stage	R1 792.20
ASCP3 once the member is discharged	R2 084.00

If a member undergoes spinal surgery when enrolled on the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, subsequent episode fee payments will stop from the date of surgery.

We have attached the HealthID training guide for the Spinal Conservative Care Programme. Should the member not meet the clinical entry criteria, code ASCP0 with rate R750.00 may be used for an unsuccessful enrolment. Please note that this code is currently in development and communication will be shared once it is available for use.

How to join the Spinal Conservative Care Network

If you would like to take part in the Spinal Conservative Care Programme, please complete the attached agreement form. Send the completed and signed form to provider_administration@discovery.co.za.

We will load your practice on the network and let you know by email or SMS when the payment agreement takes effect.

If you have any questions about the Spinal Care Programme, please email us at healthpartners@discovery.co.za or call us on 0860 44 55 66.

Regards



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Annexure A

Chiropractic Association of South Africa (CASA) network requirements

As set out by the Chiropractic Association of South Africa, please take note of the following requirements before applying to become part of the Spinal Conservative Care Network:

- Current Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa (AHPCSA) registration
- Current CASA membership
- Active malpractice insurance
- Minimum five years of private practice experience
- Continuous professional development (CPD) points for the current cycle up to date (2020 - 2022)
- Current CASA practice accreditation (2020 - 2022)
- Minimum required total points: 20 points.

Each practitioner who qualifies with the pre-requisites above must be prepared and willing to adhere to the following:

- Commitment to values of patient centricity, integrity, accountability, and transparency.
- Participate in clinical protocol development and compliance with protocols (i.e., possibly receive training or complete questionnaires regarding clinical management pathways, e.g., that of the Global Spine Care Initiative).
- Participate in peer-management and mentoring processes.
- Follow the processes and use the technology enablers, including but not limited to data capture requirements (e.g., at evaluation, midway, and discharge captured on Discovery's secure platform, HealthID).
- Accept the negotiated episode fee tariff from contracted medical schemes.
- Commitment to not charging any co-payments, administration fees or levies for any patient of contracted medical schemes while undergoing the spinal treatment programme.

Points earning requirements in order to join the network

All the following categories are required to have been within the most current two-year CPD cycle (July 2020 – June 2022) required by AHPCSA.

Membership of relevant professional bodies

- ChiroSport SA: three points
- Pain Society of South Africa: three points
- The South African Spine Society: three points
- Other relevant professional bodies: three points

Professional meetings or group discussions

- Presenter or lecturer: five points for each meeting
- Attendee:
 - CASA national annual general meeting (AGM): five points
 - CASA regional or branch AGM: four points
 - Regional meeting: three points for each meeting in the past calendar year
- Structured small group or case study discussions: two points (maximum eight points)

- Formally organised special purpose or interest group lectures (including online lectures): one point each (maximum 12 points)

Conferences

- Presentations:
 - Poster presentations: four points each
 - Platform presentations: eight points each
- Attendee:
 - Six points for each day of the conference

Seminars

- Presenter / lecturer: 4 points / presentation (max = 12 points)
- Attendee: 2 points

Short courses relevant to profession

- Presenter: two points for each module (maximum five modules = 10 points)
- Attendee:
 - Half day course: two points
 - One or two-day course: three points for each day

Education or accredited training institutions

- Presenter or lecturer: 12 points for each calendar year (maximum 24 points)
- Supervision of clinical undergraduates or postgraduates: one point for each session a week (maximum 20 points)
- Supervision of undergraduates or postgraduates' research: six points for each dissertation (maximum 18 points)

If you have any questions, please email us at healthpartners@discovery.co.za. Alternatively, you may contact CASA directly at info@casacouncil.co.za.

South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP) network requirements

As set out by the South African Society of Physiotherapy (SASP), please take note of the following requirements before applying to become part of the Spinal Conservative Care Network:

- A high level of skills for the management of complex pain patients within the biopsychosocial model. Additional training is recommended for physiotherapists treating this group of patients. The minimum requirement is:
 - Satisfactory completion of four Conservative Spinal Care Programme webinars hosted by the SASP (open to all physiotherapists registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)).
 - Additional training in neuromusculoskeletal and pain management is highly recommended.

Please provide copies of **all the** above registrations, certifications or qualifications to Discovery Health, along with your signed agreement.

If you have any queries on the above, please contact Discovery Health via email at healthpartners@discovery.co.za. Alternatively, you may contact SASP directly at info@saphysio.co.za.

Physiotherapy Association of South Africa (PASA) network requirements

These requirements will be communicated once finalised with PASA.

iZandla Consulting network requirements

Any one of the following will be accepted:

1. Completion of at least the first two modules of the Train Pain courses presented by the Train Pain Academy.
2. Completion of any recognised formal course on the management of complex pain patients within the biopsychosocial model, pre-approved by the board of directors of iZandla Consulting.

Annexure B: Schemes administered by Discovery Health that participate in the Spinal Care Programme

Scheme	Plan	Participating
Discovery Health Medical Scheme	Executive	Yes
	Classic Comprehensive	Yes
	Classic Delta Comprehensive	Yes
	Classic Smart Comprehensive	Yes
	Essential Comprehensive	Yes
	Essential Delta Comprehensive	Yes
	Classic Priority	Yes
	Essential Priority	Yes
	Classic Saver	Yes
	Classic Delta Saver	Yes
	Essential Saver	Yes
	Essential Delta Saver	Yes
	Coastal Saver	Yes
	Classic Smart	Yes
	Essential Smart	No
	Classic Core	Yes
	Classic Delta Core	Yes
	Essential Core	Yes
	Essential Delta Core	Yes
	Coastal Core	Yes
KeyCare Plus	No	
KeyCare Start	No	
KeyCare Core	No	

Closed schemes administered by Discovery Health

Scheme	Plan	Participating
Anglo Medical Scheme	Managed Care Plan	No
	Standard Care Plan	No
	Value Care Plan	No
Anglovaal Group Medical Scheme	Anglovaal Group Medical Scheme	Yes
Bankmed Medical Scheme	Basic Plan	Yes
	Comprehensive Plan	Yes
	Core Saver Plan	Yes
	Essential Plan	Yes
	Plus Plan	Yes
	Traditional Plan	Yes
BMW Employees Medical Aid Society	BMW Employees Medical Aid Society	No
Engen Medical Benefit Fund	Engen Medical Benefit Fund	Yes

Scheme	Plan	Participating
Glencore Medical Scheme	Glencore Medical Scheme	Yes
LA Health Medical Scheme	Core Option	Yes
	Comprehensive Option	Yes
	Active Option	Yes
	Focus Option	Yes
	KeyPlus Option	No
Libcare Medical Scheme	LibCare	No
Lonmin Medical Scheme	Lonmin Medical Scheme	No
Malcor Medical Aid Scheme	Malcor Medical Aid Scheme Plan A	No
	Malcor Medical Aid Scheme Plan B	No
	Malcor Medical Aid Scheme Plan C	No
	Malcor Medical Aid Scheme Plan D	Not administered by Discovery Health
Multichoice Medical Aid Scheme	M-Med Plan	Yes
Netcare Medical Scheme	Netcare Medical Scheme	No
Remedi Medical Aid Scheme	Comprehensive Benefit Option	Yes
	Classic Benefit Option	Yes
	Standard Benefit Option	Yes
Retail Medical Aid Scheme	Essential Plus Option	Yes
	Essential Option	Yes
SAB Medical Aid Benefit	Comprehensive Option	Yes
	Essential Option	Yes
TFG Medical Aid Scheme	TFG Health Plus	Yes
	TFG Health	No
Tsogo Sun Group Medical Scheme	Classic Comprehensive Health Plan	Yes
	Classic Saver Health Plan	Yes
University of KwaZulu-Natal Medical Scheme	UKZN Plan	Yes