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Dear SNSA members

2016 is almost over and I want to let you know about the activities involving the society and what is coming up in the next year. It has been a turbulent political year for both private and state employed surgeons and I have no doubt that there is more to come in the next year. There are continuous threats to both private and public health care – somehow we need to get through this in a way where we can keep providing care to our patients, maintain a high standard of care and train new high quality surgeons. Your membership helps us do this, so thanks to all of you.

I want to thank the executive as well for their work and support especially Jacques who did a great job as President for the past 2 years.

Below is a summary of activities:-

1. SNSA / CAANS CONGRESS

In July 2016 the SNSA held the 25<sup>th</sup> scientific meeting at Century City Congress Centre in Cape Town. This was combined with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Association of African Neurosurgeons meeting. We also partnered with the Congress of Neurological Surgeons from the USA.

a. Preceding and after the meeting several workshops were held including a bootcamp meeting for registrars based on the CNS program. Thanks to all the workshop conveners for doing this.

b. There were 528 attendees (325 neurosurgeons) from 45 countries (31 African). Prof Fieggen as President of CAANS and Dr DuTrevou the CAANS meeting President arranged for scholarship funding for 100 of the junior African delegates.

c. Organisation was done by Europa Africa our newly contracted PCO and was very professional in all aspects. We had facility for online registration and payment and electronic abstract management.

d. Partnering with CNS meant we had excellent speakers from their membership. All costs of their attendance were covered by CNS delegates.

e. Scientific presentations came from a wide mix of countries.

f. Profits were split between SNSA and CAANS

g. New elections for SNSA executive members were held for the period July 2016 to July 2018. Prof Taylor takes over from Dr DuPlessis as President. Prof Fieggen is the President Elect and the other executive members were re-elected to their positions.

2. CNS MEETING SAN DIEGO OCTOBER 2016

As the partnering Society several of our members and CAANS members attended the CNS meeting as invited speakers. CNS was gracious in waiving registration fees and inviting executive members to all of their business and social events. They are a young dynamic society focused on building young neurosurgeons as clinicians and leaders and a lot was learnt from their management style.

### 3. MEDICOLEGAL

- a. We have adopted the American Association of Neurological Surgeons charter on ethics, with their permission. This provides us for a framework for disciplinary enquiries and serves as a code members can refer to. We are receiving complaints regarding both poor service provision and overcharging.
- b. We continue to meet with MPS regarding high fees for indemnity (thanks to Gian Marus for arranging this). All neurosurgeons will pay the same fee irrespective of the work they do. MPS will supercharge high risk members. The limited practice income was increased. Information is to be provided to the Society on litigated cases.
- c. AON is no longer taking on new Neurosurgeons as clients but fees remain lower than MPS for existing members.
- d. Constantia Insurance is entering the market with an occurrence based indemnity with fixed premiums for 5 years. They are willing to engage with SNSA on risk lowering strategies.
- e. As an executive we need to implement strategies to protect our members from litigation and we are hoping to have practice guidelines available next year as well as rules on who may be an expert witness.
- f. We do face a crisis in Neurosurgery with members retiring early and practitioners avoiding high risk cases.

### 4. CODING

In 2015 we started a process of updating the cranial neurosurgery SAMA procedure codes that had not been modified in over 30 years. Our submission to the SAMA / SAPPF coding meeting consisted of 2 parts. An update of the description of existing codes and introduction of 150 new codes based on the CPT4 descriptions. The submission was accepted and published by SAMA in the 2016 book. Several meetings have taken place with funders in an effort to get the new codes onto their systems. We are currently working through a cost impact assessment with Discovery. If we use these CPT4 based codes with the CPT rules we will be paid less for most procedures on current funder RCF. CPT rules exclude code stacking and modifiers such as BMI adjustment. This highlights the imbalance that has crept into our current coding system and illustrates the need for a complete coding system review. No funder has yet adjusted or added the new codes to their system.

### 5. SNSA 2017 DURBAN

The next SNSA meeting will be held in 2017 in Durban in partnership with the Neurological Surgical Society of India. Work has already started and you should receive announcements soon. We hope to keep introducing activities, great speakers and learning opportunities so please join us.

### 6. INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

We continue to host international meetings and 2017 will be no exception with the following meetings  
PLANET neurovascular Cape Town in March and November [www.cpd.utoronto.ca/planet/](http://www.cpd.utoronto.ca/planet/)  
International federation of neuroendoscopy Cape town in November [www.neuroendoscopy2017.com](http://www.neuroendoscopy2017.com)  
SUN July and August Cape Town and Pilansburg [www.thesocietyofuniversityneurosurgeons.com](http://www.thesocietyofuniversityneurosurgeons.com)

### 7. REGISTRAR MEETING

This meeting will be hosted early next year by the University of Stellenbosch. Information has been sent to all department heads.

I wish you all a peaceful start to the new year and I hope you get to take some time off.

Allan Taylor

