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## Media Statement

13 October 2009

For immediate release

### **DEFINITION ON WHO MAY PERFORM COSMETIC SURGERY AND NEW HPCSA RULINGS ON TEETH WHITENING, JEJUNOILEAL BYPASS PROCEDURE**

As a regulatory body with a mandate to guide healthcare practitioners and protect the public, the HPCSA today announced two new rulings regarding who may perform teeth whitening and the banning of the jejunoileal bypass procedure.

Following numerous complaints received from the public, the HPCSA also reminded the public and healthcare practitioners of its April 2008 ruling that only specialists may perform cosmetic procedures.

More detailed information below:

**TEETH WHITENING** – Due to the performance of teeth whitening services by persons who are not appropriately qualified, the scope of the dental professions had to be reviewed with a view to protect the interests of the public. If bleaching is not correctly performed the resultant effects could be a loss of tooth sensitivity and loss in effective gum functioning. The HPCSA's Medical and Dental Board considered the matter and resolved that only dentists, dental therapists and oral hygienists may perform teeth whitening as they are adequately trained and competent.

**JEJUNOILEAL BYPASS PROCEDURE** – This bypass procedure also known as small bowel bypass has been historically used for weight loss. The procedure involves the bypass of the jejunum by more than 90% leaving 14 inches of the jejunum and 4 inches of the ileum with ingested food. Although in theory an attractive concept because a change in eating habits was not necessarily imposed, this operation was associated with severe and occasionally life threatening situations like acute hepatic failure, cirrhosis, chronic renal failure. The HPCSA has therefore banned the operation with immediate effect.

#### **COSMETIC PROCEDURES**

- a. "Cosmetic Surgery" be defined as an operative procedure in which the principal purpose is to improve the appearance, usually with the connotation that the improvement sought is beyond the normal appearance, and its acceptable variations, for the age and the ethnic origin of the patient – *Steadman's Dictionary for Health Professions and Nursing File, 2004;*
- b. cosmetic surgery was always an elective procedure;
- c. cosmetic surgery was performed in the main by **specialists in plastic and reconstructive surgery, but may also be performed by other specialists which have formal structured training, assessment and ongoing professional development in certain aspects of cosmetic surgery relevant to those particular specialties;**

- d. **assessment of competence of any such registered specialist in any particular cosmetic surgical procedure which has not formed part of specialist training shall be by a training/examination body accredited by the Board for such training;**
- e. reconstructive surgery shall not be deemed to be synonymous with cosmetic surgery;
- f. cosmetic medicine was the field that dealt with any non-surgical cosmetic procedures;
- g. cosmetic medicine was not confined to any specialty or discipline;
- h. registered practitioners should always act within the Medicine Control Council recommendations and in accordance with Rule 19 of the generic ethical rules of the HPCSA as appended:  
  
“19. *A practitioner shall in the conduct and scope of his or her practice, use only –*
  - (a) *a form of treatment, apparatus or health technology which is not secret and which is not claimed to be secret; and*
  - (b) *an apparatus or health technology which proves upon investigation to be capable of fulfilling the claims made in regard to it”*
- i. any practitioner performing cosmetic medicine procedures which result in permanent anatomical and/or physiological changes shall be appropriately trained as for cosmetic surgery.

**Ends**

### **About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)**

The Health Professions Council of South Africa is a statutory body established in terms of the Health Professions Act no.56 of 1974 with a mandate to protect the public, all consumers of healthcare, and to provide guidance on educational, professional and ethical issues to its practitioners.

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