



FRANCIS SLABBER  
& ASSOCIATES

REGISTERED AUDIOLOGISTS

*Hear & Now Autumn 2017*

# **Finally!** **We have come to Town**



After years and years of being asked to expand toward Town, Sea Point and Hout Bay we have finally taken the plunge and opened rooms in Camps Bay which is central to all.

**We are super excited to have obtained rooms at the Camps Bay Medical Practice, on the first floor of the famous Promenade Shopping Centre, on Victoria Road.**

Elisha will be manning the fort on Wednesdays only, starting immediately. As the need grows, we will increase our consulting hours there, so please support us at these lovely new rooms.

Dr Darren Levin has welcomed us to his team which also includes a Chiropractor, a Psychologist and a Dietitian. There is undercover parking and lift access. Free street parking is also available in front of and behind the building.

The rooms are equipped with everything needed so we are able to offer all the same services offered at all our other branches. Whether you need your ears tested, some new hearing aids, adjustments, repairs or surf plugs for summer on the beach, we can do it all.

We have invested in an audiometer which enables us to test noise free without a soundproof booth. This also enables us to now do more home visits as it allows for more accurate bedside testing. We can now do more home/hospital visits when the situation calls for it, usually due to health concerns.

Visiting us at the rooms is always preferred, as we test in much more controlled environments and it makes more financial sense. Home visits are charged not just by the time we have spent with you, but by the time and fuel it takes to get to you and back as well, so definitely not the most cost effective choice, but an option none-the-less.

**For appointments at the Camps Bay rooms, please call 021 797 7948**



Celeste is on maternity leave until the end of June. During these months we may be a little stretched, but rather than get a stranger to help out, we would rather manage our hours a bit and give you the quality service you're used to. Between Francis, Elisha, Beth and Sarah, we will take care of Celeste's patients until she returns in July. We wish her and her family all the best for these first few months with Baby Kelly.

## **Winds of Change in South Africa**

Audiology in South Africa has been in the Medical Aid spotlight recently. This is because there are practitioners out there providing unprofessional care and charging unethically. Chain store Audiology and car-boot hearing health services generally have nothing but profit in mind and the medical aids have taken notice.

The concern is that there is currently no accepted protocol for hearing aid billing which makes it difficult to identify unethical practitioners. Medical aids are trying to establish a system which will flag practices that charge exorbitant rates or for products/services not rendered.

As a vociferously ethical practice, we support this effort wholeheartedly but there have been some challenges along the way. Medical aids are insisting on the use of NAPPI codes when billing hearing aids, and even though we have updated our in-house systems to apply the correct codes, there have been some glitches with the various medical aids upgrading their systems to do the same. Accounts are routinely rejected and reprocessed before payment is received.

Enormous confusion is caused by this back-and-forth process; we share your frustrations as we have to query each and every account that is submitted on your behalf. Rest assured that we are doing everything we can to avoid account rejections and then doing everything possible to get rejected accounts resubmitted and sorted out as quickly as possible.

Another problem is that the Discovery Health Rate (DHR) on our tariffs for hearing tests is about half of what the accepted and prescribed medical aid rates are. We run a private practice which charges medical aid rates; rates which are based on what it costs to provide services. However, the DHR falls short of these minimum rates by over R200 per test!

Due to this shortfall, we have no option but to charge a R200 Co-Payment on all hearing tests performed on Discovery Health members. This will breach the gap on the short payments but allow us to still submit directly on your behalf. This Co-Payment does not apply to members of any other medical aids or those who are not on a medical aid. It also only applies to hearing tests performed, so will not be charged on consultations, fittings, hearing aid adjustments etc.

Medical aids have devalued our training, experience, equipment and services, but they are also paying lower benefits to their members than they should be receiving. This can only change when members stand up for their rights and question why some medical aids feel that their members deserve less than the accepted norms. Please stand up for your rights!



## *Disability Claims from SARS*

We all know that that paying Tax is a necessary evil but do you know what you may deduct from your income tax and what just has to be coughed up for?

Certain costs directly resulting from a person's hearing disability, can be deducted from income tax. Here are the details as of October 2016 – these things do change so check for updates at <http://www.sars.gov.za>

**What are the criteria for being considered a person with a disability?**  
The [ITR-DD](#) form must be completed by you and a registered Audiologist qualified to express an opinion on your hearing disability. The form must be completed every 5 years.

**What are the tax benefits for a person with a disability?**  
Once a disability has been confirmed, the taxpayer can claim 33.3% of the qualifying out-of-pocket medical expenses, which include disability related expenses, paid during the relevant year of assessment. SARS has prescribed a list of physical/sensory impairment or disability expenses available on their website.

**How do I claim for these benefits?**  
Expenses are claimed when the taxpayer submits his/her tax return. The [ITR-DD](#) form must have been completed and confirm limitation in one of the diagnostic criteria before the 33.3% deduction of qualifying expenses in respect of a disability can apply. You don't submit the form with your tax return, but retain it in the event of a SARS audit.

**What are the most common hearing loss related items on the list?**

1. Costs paid toward repairs / maintenance to hearing aids and other devices.
2. Expenses incurred to insure, maintain, service and supplement devices.
3. Amplification, shake awake alarms, signalling devices and alarm system modifications.
4. Costs incurred for services required so that you can function or perform daily activities. Services like Lip-speaker / note-taking services, rehabilitative therapy, training services to cope with the disability, counselling & treatments.

**Please speak to your audiologist about whether your hearing loss qualifies you for the benefits.**

Times are changing and more people are now embracing electronic communication. More people now have access to e-mail than ever before and they are making use of social media and internet searches. Please have a look at our newly updated website – we are very proud of it – [www.hearingclinic.co.za](http://www.hearingclinic.co.za) – and visit our Facebook page – Francis Slabber & Associates – so that you can stay updated with events and happenings in the practice. If possible, please provide us with an email address for future newsletters. We will continue to offer paper newsletters but space is more limited on an A4 and via e-mail we are able to make more regular contact or pass important information on to you.

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