

Dear Doctor

Alignd's unique, ongoing palliative care benefit available to all Fedhealth members when diagnosed with a cancer of poor prognosis

Alignd is a managed care company that offers a comprehensive, value-based and ongoing palliative care benefit. It's currently for patients with advanced stage or metastatic cancer, and can be accessed by members *from diagnosis* – it's *not* only for the last weeks of a patient's life.

Fedhealth has partnered with Alignd to be able to offer this new benefit that allows for early referral to this extra layer of care for their members.

While we recognise that encouraging involvement of a palliative care team is an individual patient process, it's important to know all patients diagnosed with a cancer with a poor prognosis, e.g. pancreatic cancer, glioblastoma, oesophageal cancer etc., and/or who have advanced stage or metastatic cancer, can be enrolled onto the Alignd Benefit, and ideally before they are needing end-of-life care.

We'd like to tell you more about this added benefit in care and support, provided by, Alignd, and how you can offer it to support your Fedhealth patients.

How does Alignd assist you to care for your Fedhealth patients?

Patients with advanced stage and metastatic cancer should have access to both disease-directed care and palliative care concurrently. The balance of care shifts over time if clinically indicated.

*"Full integration of oncology and palliative care relies on the specific knowledge and skills of two modes of care: the tumour-directed approach, the main focus of which is on treating the disease; and the host-directed approach, which focuses on the patient with the disease."*¹

The Alignd Benefit covers for that extra layer of specialised care and support for your patients – it's not a replacement of existing care. The palliative care team works in collaboration with involved healthcare practitioners, including the treating oncologist and the family general practitioner (GP). All involved healthcare professionals can stay updated on the patient's palliative care on the Alignd POPI-compliant communication platform called Signapps.

In partnership with the Association of Palliative Care Practitioners of South Africa (PalPrac - palprac.org), Alignd supports early referral to a palliative care trained doctor, empowers patients in the illness journey, and reduces costs without compromising quality. Palliative care teams' primary focus is on providing symptom relief such as pain management, and relief from psychosocial distress, regardless of diagnosis or prognosis. Early integration of palliative care has been shown to provide improved outcomes in patients with advanced cancer.²

What does the benefit cover for your Fedhealth patients?

If your Fedhealth patient has been diagnosed with advanced stage or metastatic cancer, they are eligible for the Alignd Benefit. Should they choose to take advantage of the benefit, they will either be enrolled on the Ongoing Benefit or the Intensive Benefit. The Ongoing Benefit is for patients with a cancer of poor prognosis who are still relatively active, and the Intensive Benefit is for patients who are nearing the end-stages of life.

The **Alignd Ongoing Benefit** covers an introductory consultation with a palliative care trained doctor to assess patients' needs holistically – beyond the cancer alone. Counselling for patients and their family is included, as is putting in place an advance healthcare plan or living will. The **Alignd Ongoing Benefit** covers for:

- 2 initial consultations with a palliative care trained doctor
- 2 initial consultations with a social worker if psychosocial support is indicated
- 3 follow-up consultations with a doctor, per annum (after the initial 2 consults)
- 2 follow-up consultations with a social worker, per annum (after the initial 2 consults)

Should your patient's illness be more progressed, the **Alignd Intensive Benefit** offers more support. The **Alignd Intensive Benefit** covers for:

- 2 initial consultations with a palliative care trained doctor
- 2 initial consultations with a social worker if psychosocial support is indicated
- Multi-disciplinary care (at home, or in hospital) provided by a palliative care team, including a doctor, nurse and social worker as needed, which is decided and delivered by the team
- Medication for symptom relief, as prescribed by the Alignd doctor
- Home oxygen
- Hire of a hospital bed and purchase of an eggbox mattress, where necessary
- 336 hours of home-based care at the end of life (please note that this is not a replacement for frail care)

Who pays for the extra benefit?

Importantly, the Alignd Benefit is separate from the Fedhealth patient's oncology benefit, i.e. it is **in addition to** the oncology benefit and at no extra cost to your patients. The Alignd Benefit doesn't deplete the patient's medical aid savings either, as Fedhealth has built this extra cover into their members' plans.

Is Alignd available to Fedhealth patients outside of the large metropolitan areas?

Yes, there is a Remote Access Benefit for patients in areas without a PalPrac doctor. This benefit covers for the patient's chosen GP to provide the majority of palliative care services, with peer-to-peer support from a palliative care trained doctor, in collaboration with other involved healthcare practitioners including the treating oncologist.

How do you refer your Fedhealth patients to Alignd?

You can refer all potentially eligible Fedhealth patients directly to Alignd by emailing them at referrals@alignd.co.za.

- As a formal partner of Fedhealth, Alignd has access to Fedhealth patients' clinical data. As such, you may also receive a call or email from one of Alignd's clinical team members, when they have identified one of your patients as potentially eligible for the Alignd Benefit.
- You may find that your patients are enrolled with Alignd through other pathways too, such as self-enrolment. If this is the case, Alignd will endeavour to ensure that any actively involved doctors are informed. Remember, Alignd offers an extra layer of care and support to help your patients cope on their cancer journey – it's not a replacement of existing care.

How can you find out more about Alignd and the benefits for your Fedhealth patients?

Alignd's CEO, Linda Holding, is a palliative care trained doctor, with 20 years of clinical risk management experience. She is available to chat to you directly too. If you would like to set up a telephone appointment you can email her on linda@alignd.co.za. Alternatively visit Alignd's website via alignd.co.za.

As always, thank you for the valuable oncology care you provide for our members.

Kind regards,

Medical Advisory and Health Policy Unit

¹ Kaasa S, Loge JH, Aapro M, Albrecht T, Anderson R, Bruera E et al. Integration of oncology and palliative care: Lancet Oncology Commission. *Lancet Oncol* (2018). Available from: URL: [https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045\(18\)30415-7](https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(18)30415-7)

² Hui, D., Bruera, E. Integrating palliative care into the trajectory of cancer care. *Nat Rev Clin Oncol* 13, 159–171 (2016). Available from: URL: <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrclinonc.2015.201>

Kind regards,



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