

Private, public collaboration ‘key to address health disparities’

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Section 27 executive director Mark Haywood slammed both government and the private healthcare sector on their failure to redress health imbalances.

Out of 55.5 million people, 40 million South Africans – among them the elderly with no income, children, the unemployed and unemployable – are solely dependent on the public healthcare system, says Netcare Limited director for strategy and health policy Melanie da Costa.

Addressing the Forbes-Philips Future of Health Summit on the state of healthcare in South Africa yesterday, Da Costa said collaboration between the private and public health sector was key in addressing health disparities in the country where government sought to bring into the fold people who were not medically insured and unable to afford cover through the National Health Insurance (NHI).

The solution, she said, lay in the “mandatory cover of the medically insured” to realise a R12.7 billion annual savings to the medical scheme.

Collaboration could see seven million people being absorbed by the private sector.

In his keynote address, Section 27 executive director Mark Haywood, slammed both government and the private healthcare sector on their failure to redress health imbalances.

“Health has an enormous potential and we are failing that potential,” said Haywood. “Good technologies should not only be accessible to a few in the private healthcare sector, but to all.

“There is a growing unmet need which destabilises the soul of healthcare and the economy, set to make Life Esidimeni a tip of the iceberg in unmet healthcare needs.

“While many people don’t have access to health services like oncology, the NHI Bill which is on the table, is fundamentally ill-conceived and is planned based on a bureaucracy by a government that wants it through before next year’s elections. It will not work in the manner in which it has been conceived.”

Haywood called on delegates to prepare to make inputs in the upcoming two-day Presidential Health Summit starting in Boksburg on Friday.

“We know what the problem is, we have the diagnosis, we have the resources but don’t have the solution. I ask you to get out of your trenches, dispose of your preconceptions and prejudices.

“Realise there are problems on both the public and private side of the health sector – that they are interrelated.

“Currently, we are in a state of crisis because the overall system is unsustainable and heading for a crash.

“Be guided by the constitutional imperative of everyone’s right of access to healthcare services.

“Ask yourself, would you do things differently if you had to put the country first rather than your company?”