

Backdoor NHI dealings betray public participation process – Lindy Wilson – Politics Web 26 November

Minister of Health, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, should immediately make his revised National Health Insurance Draft Bill public and should reopen the public participation process. It was reported last week that Motsoaledi had made substantive changes to the bill and presented a new version to Cabinet without consulting with National Treasury or senior members of his own department. Instead, reports suggest that the changes are the brainchild of Motsoaledi and Presidential Advisor Dr. Olive Shisana.

The DA will today write to the Minister to request an explanation for his seemingly backhanded tactics regarding this new revised Bill. The DA will require an explanation for:

- why neither Treasury nor Health Department officials were consulted on these changes;
- why the acting Director General in the Department of Health, Yogan Pillay, signed off the Bill in DG Precious

- Matsoso's absence, side-lining her, seemingly deliberately while she was out of the country;
- why has he not made public the changes to the bill which have wide-ranging consequences;
- and why he is operating in secrecy against the principles of good governance.

It is clear that the Minister's backdoor dealings do not take any input from the public seriously, as the proposed changes are substantive, and the public and other stakeholders have not had an opportunity to raise their concerns. The original draft bill was released on June 21st, with a three-month comment period that closed on September 21st.

Section 195(1)(g) of the Constitution requires that "transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information". According to reports, the revised draft Bill did not take on board concerns raised during the initial participation period. Thus, the revised draft Bill should be made public and a new participation period should be announced.

The DA reiterates its appeal for the Portfolio Committee on Health and the Standing Committee on Finance to call a joint meeting to discuss NHI. The move to universal healthcare in South Africa is too significant for the Department of Health and National Treasury to not work together in designing a sustainable model.

Universal healthcare is achievable in South Africa, but the National Health Insurance and the Medical Schemes Amendment bills will not achieve it.

Issued by Lindy Wilson, DA Deputy Shadow Minister of Health, 26 November 2018