

Public hospitals 'not bad at all'

HEALTH Minister Aaron Motsoaledi has used his admission at a public hospital to reinforce his message that the public health system is not as bad as it is made out to be. Motsoaledi was already up and about last week tackling the challenges of the health sector soon after he was discharged from Steve Biko Hospital after a successful surgery. Motsoaledi said he was not the only Minister who was using public facilities, a move that was necessary to illustrate the quality of many of the country's healthcare facilities. Motsoaledi said it pained him that his admission at a public facility could generate debate and media coverage as it was actually supposed to be the rule, not the exception. Motsoaledi said he usually urged his cabinet colleagues to use public facilities, including public schools. He said the National Health Insurance (NHI) was being misunderstood and it was really about improving the quality in the public healthcare system, getting the costs of private healthcare under control and really giving universal access to quality healthcare. According to Motsoaledi, the reliance of those who have medical aid on the private healthcare system was unsustainable because of the high costs of private healthcare. He said though there were challenges in the public health system, it was the one feeding many private hospitals with doctors and specialists. Doctors and health specialists at top private hospitals were trained in the public sector and many of them were still public servants in the country's public hospitals. He said there was no reason why all public facilities could not be brought to the standard where they could be the primary healthcare choice for everybody, even those with medical aid. According to the Minister, there is a need to fully equip the country's academic hospitals with all the resources they need as they are centres of excellence when it comes to the country's public health system.

Mogomotsi Magome: Sunday Argus, 8 September 2013