

### ***NHI to be based on an economical, preventative model rather than a costly curative form***

REGULATING salt content of food and promoting breast-feeding over formula-feeding are two of the concepts in South Africa's new approach to healthcare. In assuring Parliament that National Health Insurance (NHI) would be affordable, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi argued that the new universal healthcare coverage scheme would be based on an economical, preventative model rather than a costly curative form. Motsoaledi told the portfolio committee on health that while the white paper was yet to be released, it "was going to show that the heartbeat of healthcare needs to be primary healthcare". Motsoaledi described the current curative model as "one of the structural defects" of healthcare, which was "extremely expensive". He said many South Africans believed the NHI would be expensive as they based the scheme on the curative model. He said countries tended to associate the curative model with modernity and technology, but this often had poor outcomes as it only treated people when they fell ill. Motsoaledi said the regulation of salt content and the promotion of breastfeeding were some of the concepts that fitted into the proposed primary healthcare. By regulating salt content only, Motsoaledi said the country could make massive savings on hypertension treatment and kidney dialysis. Motsoaledi also called for parliamentarians to lead in HIV testing and prevention campaigns. He said while the country had made great strides in fighting HIV/AIDS, parliament had not led by example by having MPs publicly tested. Motsoaledi also said South Africa had been hit by a massive shortage of gynaecologists because many had abandoned their profession over the past few years. He said gynaecologists in public and private healthcare institutions had left the profession, saying it was less profitable and therefore "not worth it". The Minister said 78 doctors were due to come from Cuba, but only two of them were gynaecologists. Committee chairman Monwabisi Goqwana praised Motsoaledi for turning the department around after taking over nearly five years ago.

*Sipokazi Fokazi: Cape Argus, 17 October 2013*

*Bongani Hans: Cape Times, 17 October 2013*