

NDoH Finalising Draft of NHI Financing Models

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Health Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, has announced that a draft set of the National Health Insurance (NHI) 'financing scenarios' is expected to be ready for provincial health MECs in October.

According to the Legalbrief Policy Watch, the Minister said that – in finalising government policy on universal healthcare – the department will consider each scenario and carefully reflect on the "very useful suggestions" received from stakeholders following the release of a draft White Paper in December 2015 for comment.

Noting that the costs associated with implementing universal healthcare are "influenced by many factors, including design elements and the pace of implementation," Dr Motsoaledi emphasised the importance of focusing on the implications of each funding scenario for incrementally introducing the necessary reforms.

With that in mind, the draft scenarios will be informed by an "estimation framework" based on "configurations" of projected service demand, service delivery and associated costs 'at each level of care.

While the NHI aims to reform SA's healthcare system and to improve access to quality healthcare services that are efficient and affordable, some argue that NHI will be unaffordable and will limit the benefits offered by medical schemes.

According to Senior Consultant at HealthMan Consultancy, Dr Johann Serfontein, and one of the authors of the South African Private Practitioners Forum (SAPPF) White Paper response, NHI will be too expensive to finance and administer, and that it is based on outdated and false projections and assumptions.

Furthermore, the SAPPF believes that there are still too many uncertainties and unaddressed issues in the White Paper, from the extent of the private sector's involvement in NHI to the lack of realistic funding models.

Meanwhile, the Treasury has allocated R4.5bn in renovating healthcare facilities across 11 NHI pilot projects and allocated R300 million on developing a national electronic medicine stock management system, a key element to NHI as outlined in the White paper.

Despite the widespread criticism, the NDoH remains committed to a cautious approach going forward.

by Sikhumbuzo Hlabangane- on eHealthnews