

## **Cost of private health care must be reduced: Motsoaledi**

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Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi says the cost of private health care must be reduced while the government is still trying to improve quality and safety medical care at public hospitals.

Motsoaledi called on medical managers to review the high pricing rates on medical infrastructure which becomes difficult for struggling countries to afford. He was addressing more than 600 international health delegates at the 40th World Hospital Congress in Durban.

Delegates at the 40th World Hospital Congress have heard that the cost gap between private and public hospitals continues to be the centre of discussion globally.

The three day congress which is hosted by the International Hospital Federation is aimed at addressing challenges of global health care and safety.

Addressing delegates, Motsoaledi has called for private health care costs to be reduced. He says both the private and government owned hospitals need to work together in improving the quality of health in the country.

He says high medical costs at private hospitals force more people to use public health-care which results to backlog due to the influx.

"Public sector hospitals are still perceived to be disproportionately inefficient and slow in responding to national health priorities furthermore rising rates in both public and private sector across the whole world suggest an urgent need for a review of in-service standard facilities administrative process and legal reform."

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Motsoaledi says the lack of accessible quality health care in most developing countries should be a global concern. He says while South Africa is still trying to improve quality health, progress has been made.

"The quality of services in the public health system must be markedly improved and that the relative cost of private health care needs to be reduced. While in recent times SA has achieved a number of milestones for which we have been loaded by the international community, our country still has a lot of challenges that needs to be overcome to ensure the successful implementation of NHI ."

Officially opening the congress KwaZulu-Natal Premier Willies Mchunu says despite substantial health gains, failure to control preventable diseases is costly. Mchunu also says he believes the decision and recommendations by delegates at this congress will assist the government to provide quality health care to the overall population.

"Despite substantial public gain in recent years, failure to halt diseases that can be prevented has been extremely costly. A number of victims and health care basis will only escalate, unless we work together unless we intensify health awareness campaigns. We need to share resources as part of nation building. I am grateful that these are some of the things we are going to address in this discussion throughout the congress."

Delegates are expected to come up with resolutions that will assist the provincial government to improve its health care system.

*By Nonjabulo Mntungwa – SABC News*