

## **Motsoaledi not doing a great job**

EVER since I heard from a medical intern that junior doctors have to run to the delivery stations at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital to fill their own bags with essential medicines and sutures before the nursing staff looted and sold the supplies, I have been looking at Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi askance. Why is it that he gets such high marks from both the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Mail & Guardian (M&G), despite conspicuous failures? Of course, the DA's in a mess and M&G will always wobble with delight whenever its spots a good populist spouting off eloquently. But it really isn't before time for this cabinet minister to be called to account. He is a man in desperate search of a legend. He wants to be remembered for something - anything - that makes him look good. This is the only reason I can think of to explain why he keeps grasping at the low-hanging fruit instead of doing his job properly. As Leon Louw so graphically described in his column in this newspaper yesterday, Motsoaledi thinks private healthcare is an easy target. It is wrong in his book that people should be allowed to spend their own money on themselves - that's why he wants to take their money away from their medical aids, private hospitals and medics. It must also explain why the filthy disgrace that passes for the state hospitals, along with truculent nurses, some of whom pillage the medicines intended for those in hospital and who need them, continue to be permitted to operate as they do. Baragwanath, which was previously held up as a shining example of a vast hospital held in the highest regard by all, is now the scene of daily scums. Perhaps he should tell us why he continues to permit severe shortages of medicine and soaring maternal and infant mortality rates in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Free State. Instead of fixing those vital human problems, he produces foolish regulations about smoking cigarettes. Look at regulation (4)(a), which says no one may smoke within 10m of a window, doorway or entrance to a public place. Then he makes it the responsibility of the owner of the public place to police this. Dear Minister do SA a favour - go fix the state hospitals. Only then will you have bragging rights

David Gleason: The Torque Column: Business Day, 13 February 2014