

Health budget to prioritise NHI, HIV/AIDS treatment and new watchdog

2018-02-21 14:11 - Lameez Omarjee

Cape Town - Health accounts for 13.9% of government spend and priorities include National Health Insurance, the antiretroviral programme for HIV/Aids treatment and the establishment of a regulatory authority for health products.

According to the National Budget, government will spend R191.6bn on health in 2017/18 and R205bn in 2018/19.

This will grow to R240bn by 2020/21. Revised estimates for 2017/18 amount to R191.6bn.

An additional R4.2bn will be allocated to the national health insurance, which is a policy priority, according to the budget review.

Promoting health awareness

Over the medium term R368m will be allocated towards a public awareness campaign to complement the health promotion levy on sugary beverages and to establish a health technology assessment unit. The unit will analyse the cost effectiveness of various health interventions, the budget review explained.

Government will allocate R66.4bn to support HIV/Aids prevention and treatment.

The antiretroviral treatment programme reaches 3.9 million people. An additional R1bn will be made to the comprehensive HIV/Aids and TB grant in 2021 to expand the programme. A total of R4.4bn has been reprioritised within the grant over the next three years to support the programme.

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority will be established as a public entity in 2018/19. The authority will receive R396.9m in transfers. The regulatory body will have oversight of registration, licensing, manufacturing and importing of active pharmaceutical ingredients, medicines and medical devices. It will also regulate clinical trials in line with national policy.

The body will generate fees from the pharmaceutical and health products industry, Treasury stated.

The health facility revitalisation grant and indirect health facility revitalisation grant will be cut by R820m over the medium term. The budget will be reallocated towards infrastructure programmes.