

Impossible to calculate how much NHI will cost - Motsoaledi

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There's no way to determine the full cost of National Health Insurance, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi has said.

Motsoaledi was answering questions about NHI at a briefing in Pretoria on Thursday.

The [**NHI Bill and the Medical Schemes Amendment Bill**](#) were both gazetted on Thursday afternoon.

NHI is a health financing system that pools funds to provide access to quality health services for all South Africans based on their health needs, and irrespective of their socio-economic status. The bills will ensure that the objective of universal health coverage is achieved, said Motsoaledi.

Responding to a question about the funding of NHI, Motsoaledi said that the health department had reached out to the World Health Organisation (WHO) for their expertise on universal health coverage. "We were told what we are asking for, no one in the world has ever done, from the time universal health care was implemented," he said.

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Motsoaledi said it was more feasible to calculate the cost of NHI for each phase that was to be implemented.

"To calculate how much NHI will cost [in its entirety] is an impossibility, the World Health organisation told us," he said. "I don't understand why South Africa wants to do something no one has ever done."

Motsoaledi said that if The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) had in 1990 asked how much democracy would cost South Africa, then we would not have a democracy today.

"NHI is not a Rolls Royce, but it's not a Toyota – it is what South Africans will design it to be," he said.

- **READ: [**Funding issue still the biggest stumbling block to NHI - legal expert**](#)**

During his address, Motsoaledi said that it was up to Treasury and government to determine how NHI would be funded.

"I did not come up with NHI; it is the ruling party that did so, and passed the resolution at the conference in Polokwane in 2007," he said.

"It is the function of the government of the country to sit down and see where the money will come from."

He added that if Treasury opted for individuals to make contributions to the fund, then they would probably have to contribute according to their capacity to do so.

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