

NHI rollout will reduce healthcare costs, says Motsoaledi

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The NHI plan will guarantee the provision of quality healthcare for more than 60 percent of South Africans who can't afford medical aid cover, Minister of Health Aaron Motsoaledi said.

Midrand – The rollout of government's ambitious National Health Insurance (NHI) plan will guarantee the provision of quality healthcare for more than 60 percent of South Africans who can't afford medical aid cover, said Minister of Health Aaron Motsoaledi on Monday.

“The more people we put on treatment, the more affordable it [the prices [of medicine and healthcare] becomes, not the other way round. But in South Africa we choose the other way round. They say ‘these poor people are going to be very expensive, we cannot afford this NHI’, they want to stay with the 16 percent that are on medical aid,” said Motsoaledi at the official opening of Pharmacy Direct's central chronic dispensing and distribution centre (CCMDC) in Midrand.

“We have to keep on adding the masses of people, and that is exactly what we are going to do for NHI. Get more people in, and you improve the economy. But still people keep saying no, no, the public health sector is collapsing. These are solutions.”

Motsoaledi joined chairman of AfroCentric Group, Dr Anna Mokgokgong, and chief executive Antonie van Buuren in the official opening of the CCMDC, which will be used to distribute chronic medication in four provinces – KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and Limpopo.

The AfroCentric Group, the parent company of Pharmacy Direct, says about 4 000 jobs will be created in the programme, while making it easier for patients to receive their prescription medicines in clinics, hospitals, pharmacies, schools, and at other designated pick-up points.

“The good news is that an infrastructure like this warehouse also incentivises job creation. I am excited to announce that this warehouse and the increase in Pharmacy Direct volumes by 50 percent will help create at least 4,000 jobs during the next 12 months,” said Mokgokgong.

“The creation of these jobs will benefit more families. This also means infrastructure through innovative economic development projects that integrate commercial developments that helps create vibrant communities where people can live and work.”

Pharmacy Direct, established in 2004, is a nationwide courier pharmacy that delivers prescribed chronic medication to private and public sector patients. With a current staff complement of more than 1 000, Pharmacy Direct dispenses and distributes an average of 40 000 chronic prescriptions per day.

The national department of health awarded Pharmacy Direct a three-year central chronic dispensing and distribution contract to dispense and deliver patient medicine parcels in KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, and Limpopo.