

IS THE PROPOSED NHI BILL A GATEWAY FOR CORRUPTION?

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Health funding experts have raised questions over the timing of the NHI bill and the Medical Schemes Amendment Bill so close to the 2019 national elections.

JOHANNESBURG - Questions have been raised by some in the private sector on how the proposed **National Health Insurance** (NHI) plan could be used as a gateway for corruption.

Speaking at an event by the Free Market Foundation, health funding experts have raised questions over the timing of the NHI Bill and the **Medical Schemes Amendment Bill** so close to the 2019 national elections.

Michael Settas a consultant specialist in the health sector believes the NHI Bill and Medical Schemes Amendment Bill might be a populist move by government to win votes and a mechanism to increase taxes.

“What if that NHI package is quite poor? So, then you pay the tax there and you still have to keep your medical scheme cover.”

Senior healthcare consultant Johann Serfontein agrees.

“A medical scheme that implements a global fee where one provider pays another provider is actually guilty of corruption because they are paying one person to ignore the rules of the HPCSA [Health Professions Council of South Africa].”

The two have pointed out a number of issues which they claim are inconsistencies and incorrect information given to the public by government to gain support for the NHI.

(Edited by Thapelo Lekabe)