

## Cabinet decision on NHI Bill expected next month Health

eNews 7 December

Two well-placed sources confirmed to Health-e that, as Thursday's (6 December 2018) Cabinet agenda was full, Cabinet members had decided to defer the Bill to a special Cabinet meeting on 30 January. The NHI, which lays the groundwork for the establishment of a single health system, will be the only item on the agenda at this meeting.

The Department of Health declined to comment on the process, with spokesperson Popo Maja saying it was a Cabinet matter.

The NHI Bill sparked controversy recently when the Director General of Health, Precious Matsoso, said she had neither seen the final draft nor signed off on it before it had been referred to a Cabinet sub-committee last week.

However, Matsoso confirmed this week that she had since received a copy of the Bill, and confirmed that the NHI process was being driven by a "war room" located in the Presidency convened by Dr Olive Shisana.

Health Department Deputy Director General Anban Pillay has been seconded to the Presidency to assist Shisana.

The NHI proposes a radical shake-up of the country's health system based on compulsory contributions from all working people towards an NHI Fund. The fund will then disburse funds to health institutions – public and private – that meet certain basic criteria and are accredited as service providers by the Office of Health Standards Authority. All citizens will then be able to get health care from any accredited facility based on their needs.

It is unclear whether private medical aids will continue to exist as most working people will be unable to afford to pay contributions to both the NHI Fund and private schemes.

At the recent Presidential Health Summit called to discuss the NHI, a number of civil society organisations called on government to fix the ailing health service before introducing the NHI.

However, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi has condemned them as being against universal healthcare.

[Health-e News](#)