

Motsoaledi Called Out on Healthcare Figures

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Privately owned healthcare consultancy, HealthMan Consultancy, believes the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, should be held accountable for continually misrepresenting healthcare figures to justify the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI).

For example, during a recent media address at a Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) of Southern Africa briefing, the Health Minister said that currently 80% of the country's specialists are in the private sector and only cater to 16% of South Africa's population.

"The 16% figure refers to medical scheme members in SA, which is not the entire private healthcare sector. Many people choose to pay out of pocket to visit a private facility in order to avoid the long queues associated with the public sector," said Senior Consultant at HealthMan Consultancy, Dr Johann Serfontein.

"It's concerning, as the public believes Dr Motsoaledi because he is the Health Minister. He needs to be held accountable for what he says," continued Dr Serfontein.

Dr Serfontein noted that the latest StatsSA General Household survey shows that 27.7% of South Africans use private healthcare, and that research by Econex in 2013 showed that 28%-38% of South Africans use private healthcare. Also, according to the Department of Health Human Resources for Health 2012/2013-2016/2017 document, 58.5% of specialists work in the private sector.

Another concern for Dr Serfontein is the alleged spend on private healthcare.

During the BHF media briefing the Health Minister said: "In 2002 expenditure for private care was R22bn. In 2014 it was R140bn. When you draw up a graph it tells you that in 2018 it is going to be half a trillion rand to cover 16% of our population."

Also in February 2016, following reports by the WHO and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on the high cost of private healthcare in South Africa, the Health Minister referred to a study commissioned by the NDoH in 2014 which revealed that total healthcare (public and private) expenditure amounted to R311 billion in 2013, 42% of which was used on 8.8 million medical aid scheme members. The study also showed that some common surgical procedures had increased by 14.7% between 2011 and 2013, forcing funders to increase medical aid premiums.

“If one looks at the spend on private healthcare, listed as 42% of R311 billion (R131 billion), simple mathematics will tell you that, at the current rate of increase of 7.8% per annum, it will take 18 years to get to R500 billion,” said Dr Serfontein.

“The 14.7% increase in certain surgical procedures did not change the fact that, overall, private healthcare spending increased by 7.8% per year recently. The Health Minister clearly used this 14.7% increase of certain procedures to justify his claim of R500 Billion in 12 years,” concluded Dr Serfontein.

By Terri Chowles – eHealth news