

Draft National Health Insurance Bill Under Construction

7 September 2016

A draft bill on National Health Insurance (NHI) has been developed but cannot be finalised until the White Paper on NHI has been approved.

The health department revealed this during a briefing on its fourth quarter (2015/16) performance report in parliament.

The white paper was published for comment in December 2015. In February the department extended the comment period until 31 May 2016.

It sets out government's proposals to put a universal health coverage system in place.

The NHI aims to pool funds to provide access to quality and affordable health services for all South Africans based on their health needs and irrespective of their socio-economic status.

It is described as representing a substantial policy shift that will require a significant reorganisation of the current health care system, both private and public.

The vision is that health care should be regarded as a social investment and not subjected to market forces.

"NHI will create a unified health system by improving equity in financing, reducing fragmentation in funding pools, and by making health care delivery more affordable and accessible for the population".

The plan is for all South Africans to have access to comprehensive quality health care services.

The NHI will also "ensure a more responsive and accountable health system".

Implementation of the NHI will take place in three phases over fourteen years.

The white paper focuses on structural problems in the health sector, the burden of disease, the rationale and benefits of NHI, NHI coverage, organisation of the health care system and services under the NHI, financing of NHI, purchasing of health services and phased implementation.

The department also pointed out that a Draft Cervical Cancer Control Policy has been developed.

The memorandum of objects for a new Tobacco Products Bill has been drawn up and submitted to the state law advisors.

A national policy for nursing education and training and a policy on education and training of emergency medical services personnel were also developed and presented to the National Health Council.

By- Sabinet Cape Town Office