

Proposed free health insurance 'not to provide for luxuries'

18 October 2016

The National Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, says the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) plan will not cover cosmetic medical procedures or services to citizens.

The esteemed minister was determined in conveying that although the insurance plan will be free for all, it will provide only basic healthcare services. Other non-essential services will not be provided for.

One example he mentioned concerned prescription glasses, saying that even though the plan will be providing these services, there will be strict criteria regarding what kinds of frames members on the NHI plan will receive.

Motsoaledi added that the World Health Organisation provided the criteria for basic service delivery rendered by the NHI. Motsoaledi was speaking at a stakeholder's meeting at Bloem Spa Hotel in Bloemfontein to discuss the NHI. He was accompanied by the Minister of Health from Lesotho, as well as the Free State Health MEC.

Another issue which was discussed and mentioned by Motsoaledi, was nurses' uniforms and how it will be affected by the new insurance plan. The national minister said nurses wear whatever they want to work and this must end.

He also stated that in many hospitals, even though they all work for the Department of Health, they wear different uniforms which cause confusion as members of the public cannot identify which department or hospital the nurses and hospital staff are working for.

Motsoaledi said just as police uniforms are being provided by the state, this will now also apply to nurses' uniforms – as it used to be in the past. He said the reason for this was that nurses receive a nursing uniform allowance but end up using it for other things. He admitted that unions have threatened to strike if this should happen.

Motsoaledi said the state cannot afford to waste any more money on uniform allowances and will henceforth (at a date to be announced), provide nurses with the same uniform. He also added that the uniform will be white.

OFM News/Pulane Choane