

Office of Health Standards Compliance still not up to scratch after 5 years, says

DA

27 November 2016

Five years after its establishment, the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC) is still not up to scratch, the Democratic Alliance says.

DA spokesman on health matters Dr Wilmot James said on Sunday he had written to the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health, Mary Ann Dunjwa, to request that Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi and the Acting CEO of the OHSC, Bafana Msibi, come and explain to Parliament why it (OHSC) is incapable of measuring the quality of maternal (or any other health care) matter after five years since its establishment.

James said that a “breathtaking admission” to the Sunday Times, Motsoaledi had stated that the OHSC was, after five years, still “on a learning curve”, unable to design a robust health assessment model and therefore in no position to exercise oversight.

Asked if it took a simple organisation like the OHSC five years to figure out its job, how long would it take to establish National Health Insurance (NHI), Motsoaledi, “with supreme arrogance”, had replied: “The problem with you people is that you are so impatient. This is grossly unfair. It shows a hatred for NHI.”

“No, Minister Motsoaledi, it is not ‘you people’ who are impatient, it is ordinary South Africans waiting for decent healthcare after 21 years of democracy who have run out of patience. Ordinary South Africans, from Limpopo, to KwaZulu-Natal, to the Eastern Cape, have run out of patience with you and all of your grand plans that have come to naught. ‘Let the people wait’ seems to be your motto. Well, the people have had enough,” James asserted.

Like other health regulators, the problem with the OHSC was that it is not independent and that Motsoaledi interfered with its functioning, James added.

“Indeed, health regulators are deeply conflicted. The appointment (and re-appointment) of the Regulators depend on the very Health Minister whose Department they are required to investigate or citizen interests they must defend against state obfuscation, indifference and abuse. This is why the DA in Our Health Plan (OHP) maintains that the present configuration of regulators, and their governance, is badly designed, with implications for performance throughout the system.

“In the OHP we propose that a Quality of Care Regulator replace the weak Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC). This Regulator would oversee and audit the actual quality of care provided by all public and private health facilities. It would for the first time be able to initiate independent investigations, walk unannounced into any facility without the Minister’s permission and have the results published by law for the public to see. Critically, it would be appointed independently of the Minister of Health and report to Parliament. This is a mechanism of real oversight,” James stated.

He added: “Minister Motsoaledi and OHSC Acting CEO Mr Msibi must account to Parliament why its research methodology is at the same level as first year social science, why it has taken five years to establish a methodology that normally takes one year to finesse and why it is alright for the South African people to wait 10-15 years for the monumentally expensive and monstrously bureaucratic NHI Rolls-Royce to see the light of day when, by tackling the basic problems of health now, fixing broken hospitals and building and staffing clinics in poor areas, repairing the family Toyota as it were, it would take 5-8 years. The DA’s plan for this, called Our Health Plan, shows clearly how it can be done: it is a practical, fair and tested plan that does not stretch the national purse.”

From Timeslive