

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

To: Editors & Health Journalists

Issued by: Department of Health

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### **MINISTER MOTSOLEDI RESPONDS TO CITY PRESS ALLEGATIONS OF GOVERNMENT COMPROMISES ON NHI**

**Pretoria:** A City Press article dated 12 January 2025 alleges that: “The ANC plans to table a compromise proposal at the first Cabinet lekgotla of 2025 on how the controversial National Health Insurance can be implemented”. It is said that this will be done to appease the partners in the GNU, especially the DA.

The Minister and the department of Health want to place on record that there is no such a plan that will be proposed to the Cabinet Lekgotla.

The article, written by Dawie Boonzaaier, goes on to claim that City Press sister publication, Rapport, has learnt from: “authoritative ANC government sources that the proposal is for all South Africans working in the formal sector to be obliged to obtain medical coverage, but the state will compete with medical schemes to provide cheaper medical insurance through the NHI”.

Again, we wish to place on record that these allegations are both unfounded and ridiculous. There is no such plan from either the ANC nor from government. Any insinuation thereto is the figment of the imagination of either the author of the article or his unknown sources.

#### ***“Forcing Medical Aid Schemes to be Cheaper”***

The heading of the article claims that the ANC is going to be forcing Medical Aid Schemes to be cheaper. It is now an uncontested fact that private health care costs are escalating at a rate that are likely to collapse the sector.

Recently medical aids have been increasing their subscriptions by up to 10% and more, with GEMS going up to 13%. However, even people with rudimentary knowledge of private health care will know that forcing medical aids to be cheaper is not a solution to this problem. In fact, it will be dumb for anyone to suggest that.

It is surprising that certain segments of the media keep second-guessing about what will be done with the costs of the private health sector. This is despite the fact that a comprehensive market inquiry chaired by an eminent jurist, retired Chief Justice Ngcobo, conducted a six-year deep investigation into this matter. This was to avoid anecdotes and snake-oil remedies as suggested by this article.

Chief Justice Ngcobo received evidence and research from many domestic and international experts, including many from South Africa's private sector. It is very disappointing that people who want to write about this matter are still going on a wild goose chase.

In the coming weeks the Minister of Health will call a press conference to elaborate on the way forward with the recommendations of the Health Market Inquiry.

The Department of Health is worried that there is persistent and consistent disinformation about NHI. We know that the media widely publicised that NHI will cost R1,3 trillion (presently the total budget for the country). In recent days there is a claim that each taxpayer will pay R37 000 extra in tax because of NHI. This despite that, because the matter is court, the Minister has responded in a 215-page affidavit (done under oath) 60 pages of which are dedicated to this cost issue of NHI.

Both Health Market Inquiry and the Minister's affidavit are in the public domain. One would have expected that anyone in the media who wants to make comments to the public on these matters would have at least looked at these publicly available documents.

The department is perturbed by the posture of the media in respect of NHI. While we consider the media's sacrosanct role and mandate as that of informing and educating the public, recent reporting on NHI represents nothing but an onslaught by some sections of the media on NHI which clearly is aimed at adding confusion and discrediting NHI in the eyes of the public. The Minister therefore appeals to the media to return to its sacred mandate of reporting factually in the interests of society.

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