



MEDIA RELEASE: National Health Insurance: PSA welcomes President's approach to fostering collaboration

DATE 22 July 2024

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as a major Union representing public-sector employees, welcomes the approach by President Cyril Ramaphosa to not to rush the implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) and consider collaboration with the private medical industry and other stakeholders.

It is commendable that the President listened to the concerns raised by various stakeholders, including the medical fraternity. Major concerns included that the NHI was not consulted sufficiently and was unaffordable and not implementable. The main concern was, however, the huge cost associated with the NHI.

The massive overhaul of primary health care was rushed. Businesses, the private healthcare sector, trade unions, and legal experts therefore presented major concerns regarding the signing of the NHI. It is therefore appreciated that the President is willing to engage with the private sector to formulate a collaboration to implement the NHI correctly for the good of the country. Huge legal challenges will be avoided should government accommodate the critical inputs of various stakeholders before the process commences. Engagements between the private sector and government must determine the legislative implications for interested stakeholders. The constitutionality of the NHI must also be scrutinised to avoid further legal challenges.

The private medical-aid and healthcare industry had shown interest in assisting government to implement the NHI to achieve the national goal of quality healthcare access to all citizens. This inclusive approach will also reduce the exodus of public-sector nurses and doctors.

The PSA urges government to find consensus with stakeholders to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and train healthcare employees to realise affordable and accessible healthcare. The commitment by the President to bring stakeholders together to find a solution to implement the NHI without hindrances is welcomed. Stakeholders must collaborate and use their skills and capabilities to achieve equitable healthcare services for citizens. The PSA looks forward to engaging government at forums such as Nedlac to find common ground for the betterment of South Africans.

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