

MEDIA STATEMENT

National Planning Commission makes submission to Parliament on NHI Bill
'Cautions against vast powers granted minister in NHI'

On 9 February 2022 the National Planning Commission (NPC) tabled its submission on the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Health.

The NPC which is appointed by the President is an independent advisory body and think-tank established through the revised *Green Paper: National Planning Commission of 2010*.

In its submission, the NPC reiterated its support for South Africa to undertake reforms to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in pursuit of the right to access to quality personal health care. The NPC supports the objectives of the NHI Bill.

The presentation to parliament was delivered by NPC Commissioner Dr Ntuthuko Bhengu, who is serving a second term as a planning Commissioner.

The NPC's stance is that our country needs comprehensive health system reform and not only financing reform, particularly due to prevailing experiences of poor quality health services. South Africa should pursue the 3 goals of access, quality and cost effectiveness in a balanced way, and this should be factored into planning from the start.

"The NPC took its time to understand the issues, took advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) and conducted research. We consulted widely and undertook site visits to see NHI modelled primary healthcare clinics, first hand. We believe this helped us clarify our position today", said Dr Bhengu.

The NPC's submission is generally supportive of the Bill, but it draws attention to some specific challenges. It raises concerns with provisions pertaining to the role of medical schemes, financial affordability, as well as the institutional arrangements as they relate to governance and powers of the Health Minister. While the NPC supports the principle of the NHI, it cautions against the excessive and vast powers given to the Minister of Health under the current proposals. It proposes a more transparent and merit based process to appoint office bearers, with a greater balance of powers. These inputs are intended to strengthen and build trust in the NHI bill and the achievement of its noble goals.

For ease of reference, key highlights and recommendations from the NPC's inputs to the NHI Bill are attached.

Kindly direct all media queries to Sandisiwe Mapine 071 370 1048 / sandisiwe@dpme.gov.za.

Issued by the National Planning Commission

10 February 2022