

# Private sector skills and resources of enormous benefit to implementation of NHI

The achievement of universal healthcare coverage in South Africa could be thwarted by Cosatu's opposition to the National Department of Health's plan to allow the private sector to have a role in the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI).



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## Private sector skills and resources

According to Dr Clarence Mini of the Board of Healthcare Funders of Southern Africa, the private sector supports the government's calls for universal healthcare for all South Africans and has a wealth of expertise, processes, and systems that can give the implementation of NHI in South Africa a major boost.

“By far the most compelling reason is that the private sector comprising of medical schemes, administrators, hospitals and medical professionals have the resources that can contribute positively to the improvement of South African healthcare in general and to the improvement of healthcare provisioning in specific communities.

It is able to share its skills, experiences, research, and resources more meaningfully towards the achievement of affordable, equitable and quality healthcare. Medical schemes and administrators already look after 16% of South Africans and these skills will be of enormous benefit in the public sector which simply does not have this capacity yet.

## Public and private participation crucial

The responsibility of the minister encompasses the entire healthcare value chain across public and private entities and how these are brought together to ensure the viability and security of quality healthcare provisioning in South Africa,” says Mini.

“Our healthcare sector has its problems and we must collectively take responsibility to address the difficulties in an effort to make quality universal healthcare a reality for all – it is a task that our government cannot achieve in isolation,” he adds.

“Of key importance is the fact that the extensive experience and capacity of the private sector, which already services millions of South Africans, are not lost to the South African national healthcare project. The Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoeldi recognises the absolute gravity of the task of NHI implementation and its sustainability on the back of a shrinking economy and tax base and is being prudent in harnessing the assets and expertise that already exist in the private sector. The minister simply cannot ignore the resources that are at our disposal. Right now the focus must be on delivering a well-managed, functional and financially viable universal healthcare model for all South Africans that embraces public and private participation and buy-in,” concludes Mini.

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