

Ageing health infrastructure to receive urgent attention

The South African government has committed to upgrading and maintaining the ageing and dilapidated infrastructure at public healthcare facilities.



Photo: Kempton Express

Speaking at the two-day Presidential Health Summit held in Boksburg, Deputy President David Mabuza said it was agreed that in the context of fiscal constraints, provinces will be expected to prioritise their financial resource allocations in a manner that ensures that the delivery of healthcare is not compromised.

“More importantly, this summit pointed out that we need to develop a sustainable financing model for our health system. We will commence with this task immediately.

“National Treasury will be seized with this task to ensure that this model is finalised within a short space of time.”

“We will seek to draw on this compact as we fast-track the licensing of all health facilities in readiness for implementation of the NHI. It has drawn together a remarkable cross section of South Africans – and many of our international partners – to grapple with a challenge that is fundamental to the happiness and prosperity of our people,” he said.

The deputy president said the country was grappling with a struggling health system that was inherited from a government that denied the majority of citizens basic services.

“In recasting our health system, we are helping to reshape our society, understanding that we are engaged in a far broader struggle for the fundamental transformation of our economy and our country.

“We approach our task understanding that health is not merely a function of hospitals that are properly staffed, clinics that are well equipped, health professionals that are effectively trained, and medicines that are available and affordable.

“The path we have chosen is irreversible. We are at the point of no return. We must be bold, determined, and focused on the goals of equality and universal health coverage for all.

“Brick by brick, we must build this house together. We must walk this journey together, side by side, with all our partners gathered here today to ensure that the vision of a unified health system is achieved in our lifetime.”

NHI

Mabuza said the Presidency plans to use the outcomes of the summit as a springboard to dramatically improve the health system in preparation for the implementation of the NHI.

“We have heard over the last two days the voices of those who work at the frontline of health care delivery.”

While some have lamented the state of things, most have sought solutions, and all have expressed a commitment to move forward. We are fortunate in that we are not alone in many of the challenges we face. The lessons we have learnt from the World Health Organisation among others are instructive as we plan our version of universal health coverage.”

The deputy president said the state intended to develop a compact among all key stakeholders, including government, health providers, academics, health system users, labour, private sector and civil society.

“This compact will provide guidance and assist in the implementation of critical tasks, such as updating the quality improvement plans for all our health facilities to ensure a better service experience for all our citizens.”

The compact, Mabuza said, will assist with the development of a human resource operational plan to allow us to correct the deficiencies in the system.

“This summit is the beginning of a new phase of cooperation and collaboration in undertaking the critical tasks that are needed to turn our health system around. We will confront many challenges along the way. At times, we will disagree. But, for the sake of the South African people, we will remain committed to the fulfilment of this great responsibility.”

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