

NHI open for public comment soon

The National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill of 2018 will be published in the *Government Gazette* shortly for public comment.



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A key provision of the bill will be the establishment of an NHI fund to pay for health services so that all South Africans have access to quality care.

“The bill seeks to establish the NHI Fund of South Africa, as a public entity, so as to provide for a sustained universal health access that is affordable and of high quality. It also sets out its functions, powers and duties,” Cabinet said in a statement following its regular fortnightly meeting.

The bill provides a framework for the active purchasing of health care services by the fund on behalf of users and creates mechanisms for the equitable, effective and efficient use of the resources of the fund to meet the health needs of users.

The NHI, which government began piloting in 2011, proposes a single, compulsory medical scheme for all, with private medical schemes being reduced to offering complementary services.

All citizens and permanent residents will be covered by the NHI, while a special fund will be set up for refugees. Documented asylum seekers will be able to access emergency care. Everyone else will need medical insurance.

NHI is being introduced in three phases, starting with preparing central hospitals to provide specialised services to all citizens, under the control of central government.

Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi is next week expected to hold a full media briefing to unpack this bill.

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