

BHF calls for calm

The Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF) has applauded the National Assembly's move to pass the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill as a milestone in advancing and placing the health of citizens at the heart of healthcare reform.

It recently came out to call for calm calling on citizens and the health sector not to panic at the announcement.

The Bill faced opposition from several parties with 125 votes casted against it while 205 voted in favour of it.

MD of the BHF, Dr Katlego Mothudi said the entire funding industry is a national asset and its contributions should be rightly seen as an attempt to place the priorities of the health of the citizen first.

He further said South Africa's healthcare has remained unequal, indicating that the current trajectory of healthcare was 'unsustainable'.

He shared that BHF and its members were committed to building a strong, person-centric healthcare ecosystem that is sustainable, resilient, affordable, and accessible to all health citizens.

"Medical schemes including managed care organisations and administrators as well as other funders of health are an asset to the ecosystem and are geared to move our country to achieve universal health coverage," he said.

BHF said while the Bill represents a significant policy shift that aims to eliminate disparities, it however has raised concerns regarding the translation of policy intent and believes that the NHI Bill, in its current form, hinders the achievement of the global Agenda of Universal Health Coverage by 2030.

According to Mothudi, the BHF has identified several anomalies in the Bill that require further attention and alignment with constitutional mastery.

Mothudi went on to say that it is crucial to recognise that the NHI Bill was not Universal Health Coverage, but rather a funding mechanism.

In addition, BHF emphasized that aligning with the principles of UHC is essential to meeting the needs of health citizens.

Health Minister Joe Phaahla said it's one of the most revolutionary bills ever passed by the house.

The Bill will now go to the National Council of Provinces for concurrence before it goes to the president for his consideration.