

Sama says NHI will collapse if implemented now

A National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme will collapse if it is implemented now claims the SA Medical Association (Sama).



"The health system is overwhelmed by the little and decaying resources that it has and this is compounded by the increasing population figures where both nurse-to-patient and doctor-to-patient ratios are excessively high," said Sama public sector doctors' committee chairman, Dr Phophi Ramathuba.

Sama and Denosa had started a positive practice environment (PPE) campaign, which could help implement the NHI, and minimise litigation for medical negligence.

"With the PPE, [the NHI] is likely to work," she claimed.

Ramathuba was speaking after a meeting between Sama and the Democratic Nursing Organisation of SA (Denosa) on Friday (8 February) which together represent more than 100,000 healthcare professionals, about problems in the sector.

"Of major concern is that [recent] incidents have damaged the relationship between health professionals and members of the communities, who believe that the professionals are to blame for all the problems at the facilities," she said

These incidents included reports of a series of deaths at the Mankweng Hospital, in Limpopo, over four months; the alleged mismanagement of R1.4bn by the Eastern Cape health department; and the deaths of four babies at George Masebe Hospital.

Other problems involved safety, supplies, resources, payment of medical officials, education, equipment, support and respect.

Denosa and Sama want to meet Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi about the problems in the sector.

Denosa president Dorothy Matebeni said health care professionals knew what to do to fix the problems and that the government should use them to do so.

"It is the system that we need to correct, so the community can benefit," she said.

Matebeni said Denosa called on the government to replace people who had retired and to stop pleading poverty.

Ramathuba said hospitals needed fewer managers and more people who could fix problems as they arose, such as in-house plumbers and electricians.

She said Sama was talking to the Gauteng health department about the payment of doctors, and that doctors and nurses would not go on strike because this would affect communities, rather than the people who need to listen to them.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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