**Media Statement: Committee Welcomes Evaluation of Phase One Implementation of the Interventions in the NHI Pilot Districts in SA**

**Parliament, Thursday, 5 March 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Health was briefed by the Department of Health on Wednesday at Parliament on the National Health Insurance (NHI) Pilot Districts Evaluation Report.

The committee welcomed the report, but raised concerns regarding the challenges that were experienced during the implementation phase of the NHI pilot projects.

Briefing the committee, the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, said South Africa is amongst the countries that are becoming unable to explain the delay of the implementation of universal healthcare. “We are no longer dealing with a matter of if we should introduce it, we are dealing with a matter of when it must be introduced,” said Dr Mkhize.

Responding to the concerns raised by the committee, Dr Mkhize said it will take a while to get everything right. Furthermore, he said, the concerns expressed by the committee on the issues concerning congestion, understaffing, overcrowded facilities and poor infrastructure, need more and closer concentration.

Dr Mkhize reiterated that the uncertainties that were highlighted by the committee will be addressed as addressing them will ensure the implementation of NHI.

The committee welcomed the report and appreciated the success on all the ten indicators that were used. Most of the indicators, according to Dr Mkhize, are innovative and are meant to focus on strengthening the systems. The committee also voiced its concerns on the challenges that were identified.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, DR SIBONGISENI DHLOMO.**