

SACTWU Submission on National Health Insurance Bill



SACTWU

Parliamentary Hearings
8 Feb 2022



COSATU

Overview of SACTWU

- Trade union & affiliate of COSATU
- Internationally affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union
- 126 000 members across South Africa
 - Predominantly clothing, textile, footwear and leather (CTFL) workers and a presence in +1 500 factories nationally (excluding other non-industrial workplaces such as farms etc)
 - Also in other sectors and workplaces such as laundry, agriculture, farming, forestry, agro-processing, and retail distribution
- Members have low wages, support ±5 dependents
- Mainly women in poorest parts of the country





SACTWU supports the NHI Bill

It offers a significant step towards safeguarding the lives and health of our vulnerable working class through the provision of free, decent, affordable and timeous healthcare

Our views are aligned with our federation, COSATU

Focussed input for these Hearings:

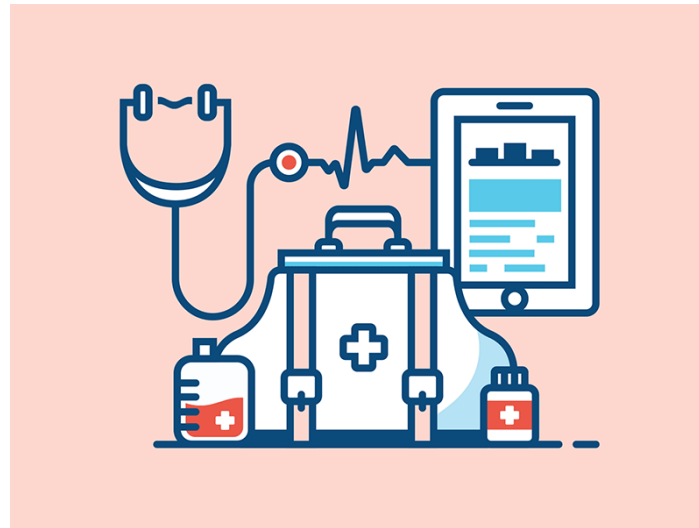


The Bill should recognise bargaining council clinics as accredited healthcare service providers under the NHI

BARGAINING COUNCIL CLINICS IN CONTEXT

Different bargaining councils exist in the country, and some operate healthcare facilities for workers

Many unions may offer such benefits to their members too



Existing services & infrastructure can be harnessed for NHI

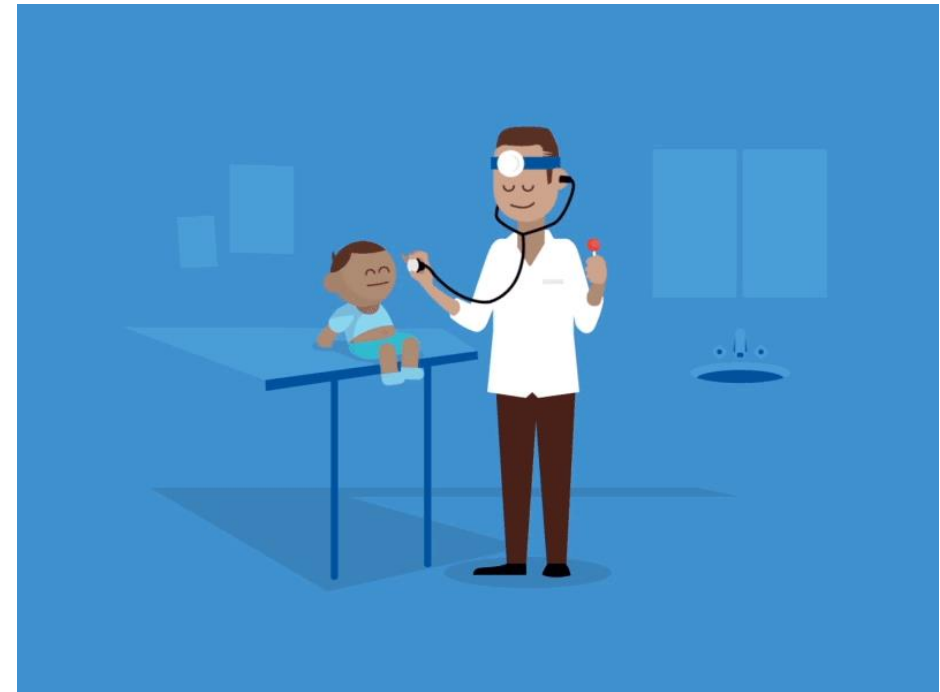
Our Healthcare Interventions

- SACTWU has been involved with healthcare interventions for members & dependents for decades:
 - E.g. indirect healthcare assistance
 - Collective bargaining forums in clothing sector (e.g. bargaining council) have run clinics since 1942, providing primary medical, dental and optical health care, and chronic medication provision and support to industry workers. Also in leather and footwear sector.
 - E.g. direct healthcare assistance
 - SACTWU itself has provided direct support to workers for about 2 decades for HIV/AIDS & TB awareness, training, testing and treatment services



e.g. Clothing Sector Healthcare Footprint

- 10 primary healthcare clinics across W. Cape, KZN and Gauteng
- 52 medical professionals employed
- 50 medical students
- About 100 panel doctors providing on-demand services
- About 200 000 direct consultations provided to workers free in 2019 (pre-COVID)



e.g. of Health Services Offered

- Health screenings (blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, HIV and PAP smears)
- Treatment of acute and chronic conditions
- HIV/ AIDS disease management, including workplace testing
- STI screening, testing and treatment
- TB screening, testing and treatment
- Dental, optical and physiotherapy services
- Medication dispensing
- Social work services
- Assistance in accessing social grants
- Home-based care
- Workplace health awareness, education and training
- Healthcare services to industry retirees
- General healthcare awareness promotion
- General primary healthcare visits and treatment



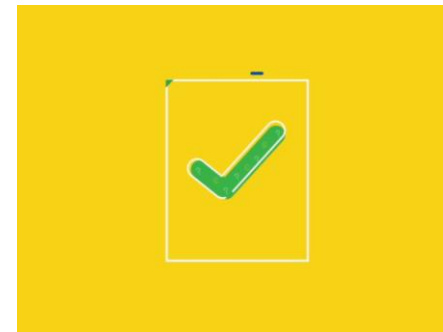
Quick Response e.g to COVID Vaccination Needs

- Parties to the clothing bargaining council signed a COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout Campaign Framework Agreement in April 2021:
 - Targeted 80% of industry workers to be vaccinated
 - Clinics quickly pivoted to provide accredited COVID vaccinations to clothing and other workers
- End Nov 2021: $\pm 74\%$ of clothing workers served by our industry clinics had been vaccinated (more than double national average which was 35% at the time)



Benefits to Workers and the NHI

- Unique strengths
 - Located within industries/ well known to workers/ easily accessible
 - Strong & established industry networks enable efficient roll-out of interventions
 - Can target workers at workplaces, and be preventative
- Alleviate operational burden on DOH for disease prevention/ education/ early detection/ diagnosis/ early treatment
- Ideal-clinic model for the NHI for piloting



TOWARDS INTEGRATION WITH NHI

- Bargaining council clinics should be accredited healthcare services providing NHI delivery support
- Currently Bill doesn't - *but should* - recognise bargaining council clinics as accredited NHI healthcare providers
- Inclusion of bargaining councils in the NHI may require a suitable amendment to the LRA of 1995
 - Section 28(1)(g) limits operations of healthcare funds of bargaining councils to council Parties and their members
 - Widen scope so clinics can cater to broader public under NHI
- Bill should include vigorous mechanisms to prevent fraud and corruption within NHI Fund & procurement

