**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH EXPRESSED DIFFERING VIEWS FOLLOWING MEETING WITH THE MINISTER**

**Parliament, Friday, 18 November 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Health expressed differing views following a meeting with the Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla on the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill. In the meeting, the committee heard the department’s response to issues raised during public hearings and the committee’s clause-by-clause deliberations on the Bill.

Briefing the committee, Minister Phaahla said the Department of Health has listened carefully to the committee’s engagements with the community, the oral submissions and the clause-by-clause deliberations. “Our general observation is that the intentions of the Bill and the complexities of how government works and how services are financed require ongoing engagement,” he said.

Some committee members called the Minister’s presentation insufficient and unacceptable. They said the Minister and the department should appear before the committee again to provide a detailed response and a proper funding model to ensure that the NHI is equitable.

Committee members further expressed a view that the presentation fell short of the committee’s hard work in processing the Bill. They further hope that when the department and state law advisors and other legal advisors address the committee, they will provide information on the legal issues that are of concern in the Bill.

Other committee members welcomed the Minister’s presentation. Committee Chairperson Dr Kenneth Jacobs said he was happy to see that the Minister recognised the polarised views and the observations made by individuals, lobby groups, organisations and professional bodies who made presentation on the Bill.

Dr Jacobs was of the view that the presentation acknowledged the challenges raised by various groups, while recognising that a larger number of people support the Bill. Dr Jacobs emphasised that the Minister’s remarks were only introductory and that the presentation provided a broader discussion on the role of provinces and the fate of medical schemes in terms of the NHI.

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

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:
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