**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH POSES QUESTIONS TO CLEAR CONFUSION AROUND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE**

**Parliament, Friday,  23 June 2023 –** The Select Committee on Health and Social Services posed several questions to the Department of Health during its engagement with the department. The department briefed the committee on the National Health Insurance Bill which was passed by the National Assembly recently.

The committee asked the department to elaborate on how the Bill will improve the health infrastructure and assist to increase the number of health professionals that are needed at healthcare centres especially in the rural areas as the majority of doctors prefer to work in the cities. The committee also asked the department to explain how the NHI will help to enhance technology at the healthcare centres, and where will the funds come from to assist those that are unable to assist themselves.

The committee told the department that there are a host of concerns regarding the Bill which need to be interrogated. Furthermore, the committee questioned the department on how it plans to address the current challenges of poor service delivery in the health sector. It highlighted the lack of staff and the poor delivery of healthcare services currently at public healthcare centres and told the department that the poor state of the delivery of healthcare services will negatively affect the implementation of the NHI.

The department has assured the committee about the existence of plans to make the NHI provide quality healthcare services to the people. It said the NHI is not a tender process, it is a voluntary registration process by private or public service providers. The department assured the committee that no tender will go out, the process will be tightened, and the provision of services will be regulated. The NHI will enter into contracts with private and public health service providers as well as private health practitioners for the provision of services.

In response to a question on budget generation, the department told the committee that the NHI is a fund with which the government will buy healthcare services for South Africans from healthcare service providers in the public and private health sectors. It said the NHI fund will be generated through taxes and special contributions. The NHI will ensure that every South African is entitled to free healthcare services as the fund will cover the costs for all.

Committee Chairperson, Mr Zoyisile Njadu, said the process of the bill is a six-week cycle, where there will be provincial briefings and public hearings in provinces as well as a call for submissions from the public by the committee. Mr Njadu said the committee will finalise the Bill in October 2023.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES MR ZOYISILE NJADU**

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:
**Name: Ms Yoliswa Landu**
**Parliamentary Communication Services**
**Tel: 021 403 8203**