

## Minister announces health insurance committee

HEALTH Minister Aaron Motsoaledi has announced that Human Sciences Research Council CEO Olive Shisana will chair the government's new advisory committee on national health insurance (NHI), yesterday. She will head a 25-member body charged with advising the Minister on policy, legislation and implementation of the NHI. The release of the committee names has been keenly awaited by private health sector, anxious about its future role. A leaked draft of the African National Congress' (ANC) NHI proposals, which were driven by Shisana, describes a single national health service providing care to everyone regardless of their ability to pay, a scenario that critics say is unaffordable. The committee's first job will be public consultation on the report produced by the ANC's NHI committee. The report was finalised in June and is expected to be released shortly as a Cabinet-approved white paper. Motsoaledi declined to specify a release date. Shisana said the policy was about the transformation of the health system - a complete overhaul. She said that the aim was a safety net for the entire SA, and added that people must not be afraid of being bankrupted by medical expenses.

The committee members are former Medunsa chancellor Ephraim Mokgokong; health economist Diane McIntyre; social worker Shirley Mabusela; PricewaterhouseCoopers' Mark Claassen; former Western Cape health official Barsel; AIDS Law Project head Mark Heywood; Wits University's William Pick; pharmacist Solly Suleman; Charlotte Maxeke; Johannesburg Hospital's Mosidi Maboye; Adcock Ingram's Kuben Pillay; Medi-Clinic's Roly Buys; South African Medical Association chairman Dr Norman Mabasa; Debbie Pearmain and Humphrey Zokufa from the Board of Healthcare Funders; Charles Hongoro from the Human Sciences Research Council; Baby Twaya from the Government Communication and Information System; South African Revenue Services' Sobantu Ndlangalavu; Maj-Gen Mokgethi Radebe, a general practitioner; the Treasury's Mark Blecher; the Department of Health's Yogan Pillay; and the Department of Communications' Keith Shongwe.

The team also includes foreign experts: Dr Joseph Kutzin, adviser for health system financing in the European region of the World Health Organisation; Dr William Savedoff, senior partner at Social Insights in Maine, Portland; and Prof Prabhat Jha, from the University of Toronto, in Canada.

Tamar Kahn: Business Day, 6 June 2009