

RAMAPHOSA BLASTS CORRUPTION IN HEALTH SECTOR – EYEWITNESS NEWS 1 OCTOBER 2019

TSHWANE - President **Cyril Ramaphosa** on Tuesday said corruption in the health sector costed lives and affected poor people the most.

Ramaphosa launched the Health Sector Anti-Corruption Forum in Tshwane, which was a collaboration between law enforcement, the private sector, and civil society to deal with losses now estimated at R22 billion.

*** Private healthcare report: Various role players colluded to rob consumers**

Law enforcement agencies said they were already dealing with cases in all nine provinces.

Ramaphosa said he got a wakeup call during the recent elections campaigning when he discovered how many of the billions of rand allocated to health was targeted by fraudsters.

“It pained me that access to health had been impacted by corruption, some pay above the official rate for free services. Moonlighting nurses neglect patients and vehicles are hired out or sold,” he said.

The president said the focus would now be on prevention to ensure new initiatives, like the **National Health Insurance** (NHI), succeed.

“Health corruption costs lives.... We have to make sure that NHI pool of funds is not wiped out through fraud and corruption.”

Ramaphosa commended the Special Investigating Unit and National Prosecuting Authority for the cases they were already investigating and prosecuting. He said he was aware that they needed to be capacitated to handle commercial crimes.

The president's comments came a day after the Competition Commission released its findings on healthcare providers in the private sector.

The commission's inquiry found that health practitioners had been sending patients to private hospitals unnecessarily, just because medical schemes would pay.

It also found that various role-players had been colluding to rob consumers.

The commission recommended a new tariff regime and a regulator to set prices in consultation with practitioners, hospitals and funders.