

REPORTS OF SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS, NURSES IN SA UNTRUE – PHAAHLA – EWN 14 OCTOBER 2019

Deputy Health Minister Joe Phaahla said that South Africans should not be concerned that once the NHI was implemented that the public health system would collapse due to a shortage of staff.

NAIROBI - Deputy Health Minister Joe Phaahla said that reports of shortages of doctors and nurses in South Africa were simply untrue.

Phaahla told Eyewitness News that there would be enough doctors and nurses when the **National Health Insurance** was implemented as health professionals who worked in the private sector would be integrated with those who worked in the public sector.

He said that under the current system, health professionals were unevenly distributed, with the private sector having a higher number of doctors and nurses.

Phaahla was speaking on the sidelines of the International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi.

The deputy minister said that South Africans should not be concerned that once the NHI was implemented that the public health system would collapse due to a shortage of staff.

"There is a very small element of a real shortage. The bigger part of it is not a real shortage."

However, Phaahla admitted that a funding plan for the NHI had not yet been finalised.

Treasury previously raised concerns about the financial viability of the NHI and Finance Minister Tito Mboweni announced during his recent Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement that his department was locked in discussions with the Health ministry.

Phaahla said that he was confident they had a workable plan.

"The idea here is that you must pull both the budgeted funds from Treasury and the contributions from those who are employed and who have an income into one pool of funding."

Minister in the Presidency Jackson Mthembu said that the Department of Health could be assured that it would have the support to implement the NHI as the bill was approved by Cabinet.