

Govt not prepared for medical brain drain if current NHI bill implemented - Sama – 702 3 January 2020

“The establishment of the NHI as a single, monopolistic purchaser for health care opens its structures up to large-scale corruption.”

This is the response of the South African Medical Association (Sama) to a universal health care system as outlined in the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill.

Sama spokesperson Dr Mvuyisi Mzukwa says the biggest problem with the bill in its current format is its potential to allow unchecked corruption - a real concern given the breakdown of trust in the government from the general public and the medical profession in particular.

The association's survey of its members (it represents around 17,000 doctors) has found that up to 40% would consider emigrating if the bill is implemented as is.

According to Dr Mzukwa, a potential brain drain is not the only problem - there is already a trend for the country's doctors to change careers.

We've got doctors who go into entertainment, we've got doctors who go into business because they're not sure of what is happening, they are not certain about the future of medicine in this country.

— *Dr Mvuyisi Mzukwa, Spokesperson - South African Medical Association*

We needed to make sure that government understands these concerns before you put it into an act.

— *Dr Mvuyisi Mzukwa, Spokesperson - South African Medical Association*

He warns that there will be little room for adjustments once the bill is implemented.