

QUESTIONS REMAIN ABOUT NHI FUNDING, IMPLEMENTATION – EWN NEWS JANUARY 2020

Some concerns about the NHI Bill include whether or not the central fund it provides for will become just another looting ground for corrupt officials.

CAPE TOWN - The country's health services are likely to come into even sharper focus this year as the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill makes its way through Parliament.

The **NHI Bill** aims to enable universal health coverage for all South Africans, regardless of what they can afford to pay.

The bill is currently before Parliament's health committee, which aims to finish processing it by June or July.

The government says that healthcare is a human right that should not depend on how rich someone is or where they live.

But while the NHI could revolutionise the healthcare system in the country, there are doubts about how it will be funded and implemented.

The National Assembly's health committee has received around 130,000 written submissions so far and must still decide how these will be processed.

Committee chairperson Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo said the committee aimed to complete provincial public hearings before the State of the Nation Address in February and would then have more hearings at Parliament.

Questions about the NHI Bill include whether or not the central fund it provides for will become just another looting ground for corrupt officials.

"Those are genuine concerns. The Department of Health must answer that and tell us how it aims to protect this fund so it doesn't become like the state-owned enterprises that we know have been looted."

Dhlomo said the department also had to tackle long queues, staff shortages and medicine stock-outs at public health facilities.