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MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
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PROCEEDINGS OF MINIPLINARY SESSION - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAMBER

Members of the mini-plenary session met on the virtual platform at 14:00.

The House Chairperson Ms M G Boroto took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon members, before we proceed, I would like to remind you that the Virtual miniplenary is deemed to be in the precinct of Parliament. And constitute a meeting of the National Assembly for debating purposes only.

In addition to the rules of Virtual sittings, the Rules of the National Assembly including the rules of the debate apply. Members enjoy the same powers and privileges that apply in a sitting of the National Assembly.

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Members should equally note that anything said in the Virtual platform is deemed to have been said to the House and may be ruled upon.

All members who have logged in shall be considered to be present and are requested to mute their microphones and only unmute when recognised to speak. This is because the microphones are very sensitive and will pick up noise might disturb the attention of other members.

When recognised to speak please unmute your microphone and connect your video, but we will understand if you are having problems with your network.

Members may make use of the icons on the bar at the bottom of their screens which has an option that allows the member to put up his or her hand to raise a point of order.

The secretariat will assist in alerting the Chairperson to members requesting to speak. When using the Virtual system members are urged to refrain or desist from unnecessary point of order or interjections.

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Hon members, we shall now proceed to the Order which is Debate on Vote No 18 - Health, Appropriation Bill. I will now recognise the hon Minister of Health.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Debate on Budget Vote No 18 - Health:

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much hon Chairperson. Greetings to you, greetings to my colleague, the Deputy Minister, Dr Dhlomo, the Chairperson of Portfolio Committee on Health, Dr F L Jacobs, all members of the portfolio committee, Members of the National Assembly, MECs colleagues who might be on the platform, leaders of various entities which work with us, those which report to the department and those who are also our stakeholder, ladies and gentlemen, and members of the public, we thank the hon Speaker, through you Chair, for this opportunity to present to the House the Budget Vote 18 of the Department of Health for the 2022/23 financial year.

Hon Chair, we present this Budget Vote No 18 - Health at a time of lots of hope and optimism after a devastating two-years of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a country, we have

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witnessed four waves of this Covid-19, and we are now in a speculation as to whether we are already in the 5th wave, or is it still coming to our shores. Indications thus far are that we are not yet in the 5th wave but that as the winter season encroaches on us and we spend more time indoors including family and other form of gatherings, the risk of the 5th wave will be getting much stronger. It will continue to loom large on upon us.

Over the four waves, we have lost loved ones, family and friends, work colleagues, national leaders and icons from various aspect of life including politics, religion, traditional and business leaders and across all aspects of society. Even these Houses of Parliament the NA and the NCOP have not been spared the wraths of Covid-19 as we have lost some of our colleagues.

We thank the leadership provided by our government under President Ramaphosa for not only guiding the nation throughout these turbulent times, but for mobilizing all of society behind the mitigation interventions. I wish to restate again that the measures that the government took utilizing the Disaster Management Act were meant to protect the people of

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South Africa against the harshest impact of Covid-19. These measures help us to flatten the curve and make sure that we are not overwhelmed by this pandemic. And that our health services could cope.

All of us will remember the images we saw of the devastation in the various parts of the world in various continents such as Europe, images from countries such as Spain, Italy, United States of America, US. Who can forget images on television, TV, of New York and other parts of the US, Brazil, with hundreds of thousands of people dying from the virus, etc.

We are grateful that while our country has also suffered a lot including the loss of more than hundred thousand lives in terms of a formal record but we also know that in terms of excess death the estimation is probably double. Also, the devastation to the economy with massive job losses. Our health services while it struggled especially under first three waves, it never collapsed under this pressure. Our health services remained standing under pressure, but still remain standing.

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We thank leaders of all sectors of society for working with government. We wish to assure all South Africans that as government we get no joy in inconveniencing you from time to time with restrictions. We say sorry where we have wronged you but please be assured that all interventions were meant and are still meant for all of us to avoid severe impact of Covid-19.

We completely disagree with armchair critics who argue that we should just drop all public health measures and just let the virus spread at will and that we should only worry about whether we got enough beds in hospitals and whether we still have oxygen and intensive care units, ICUs. We disagree this. As the public health authorities, we believe that we should guide the nation in terms of prevention of severe impact of this pandemic.

While the pandemic has derailed some of our programmes, as we had to direct all resources, we have also had positive experiences and lessons during this period. We have learned to work as all governments from local, provincial, and national, - And also to bring in skills and expertise from various entities. We have learnt on how to work together with private

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sector, from securing of commodities such as personal protection equipment, PPEs, diagnostics, therapeutics and even more co-operation working together in securing and also administering vaccines.

We have learned how to work with our scientists to guide our intervention, not always easy because scientists themselves do not agree on everything. But we have really gained a lot from this co-operation and their intervention. And of course, scientists like any other people in society will not always agree on everything, but it's been quite useful.

From where we were this time last year, we have made lots of progress with our vaccination programme. As of yesterday, we have administered 35, 182 million vaccine doses to just over 19,700 million adult individuals which translates to 49, 5% of all adults at least having had the vaccination. It still below 50%, we are still not very good.

Whilst it is also true from some of the experts that more than 70% of the population have had contact with the viruses, and therefore do have some natural immunity. The truth is this immunity wanes with time and cannot be boosted unlike the

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vaccination. So, while the virus is amongst us, the best defence is still vaccination. We have been allocated over R2 billion in 2022/23 financial year, to add if we need more vaccines doses.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our gallant health workers who have been and still remain the frontline warriors against the Covid-19 pandemic, just as they have done also against HIV and Aids, TB and Non-Communicable Diseases. They have risked their own health and their families' health, and many have paid with their own lives. We pay tribute to them and their families, and may the souls of those who have departed in the battle against covid rest in eternal peace including the health workers and all our citizens who department as a result of this pandemic.

Hon Chairperson and members, in this financial year, our major focus will be on the recovery of our comprehensive health services. We have already agreed with all MECs that going forward the key is to integrate the mitigation against Covid-19 into our comprehensive basket of services from primary health care, PHC, levels upwards including the vaccination program which must increasingly be part of a comprehensive services. We want to refocus on improving the quality of

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services as guided by various policy documents especially the National Development Plan, NDP and the Presidential Health Summit of 2018, and the Health Compact signed in 2019 by various stakeholders. We again call on everyone above the age of 12 who has not yet vaccinated to come forward and receive their vaccine to protect themselves and those around them.

Our budget allocation for the financial year 2022/23 is a total of R64,5 billion, of which 86% or just around R55 billion will be transferred to provinces as conditional grants to support various activities such as the HIV and Aids, TB and sexually transmitted infections, Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes, STIs, support for human resources including medical interns and community services doctors, and other professionals and also significant allocation for infrastructure support.

We are however concerned that in terms of the indicative amount over the next two-years of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, our budget be declining by 1,7% nominally, - and even before considering inflation, which cannot be good for sustainability of our health services.

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Hon Chair and members, as the ANC-led government, we remain committed to the attainment of the universal health coverage for all South Africans. We urge all Members of Parliament from the portfolio committee and also in to the full House to support the National Health Insurance, NHI, Bill, which is currently in front of the portfolio committee. Because this is our instrument to achieve universal health coverage.

In the meantime, we are laying the foundation for a strong public health system, which will underpin an integrated health system for the country. We want to bring down the barriers between private and public and just have one integrated health system through the NHI as the tool to implement that.

The Covid-19 has facilitated closer co-operation with private health providers, from sharing hospital beds at the heights of the Covid-19 to common platform for reporting on Covid-19 tests and availability of beds, also recording on the vaccination through the Electronic Vaccination Data System, EVDS, which is a common platform for all providers of vaccination which is publicly owned under the Department of Health.

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Within this budget allocation made under the NHI programme. Essentially, this is meant to strengthen the public health platform such as targeted infrastructure upgrades across the country, contracting of private PHC providers, doctors and nurses, acquiring of oncology services and also adding more capacity for mental health services.

We also have a ring-fenced amount to prepare for implementation of the NHI programme once the Bill is passed. Such preparation includes the design of benefits, pricing, provider accreditation, management of health products procurement, further development of the digital platform systems and developing risk management and anti-corruption systems.

A lot of progress has been made with Health Patient Registration System, which has now registered more than 57 million South Africans in more than 3 100 health facilities. Further work has to be done towards the establishment of the single, portable patient record system with interoperable digital system.

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Improvement of quality of service at public health facilities will be a major focus in this financial year. Already 21 quality learning centres have been established in the country with 102 hospitals, including some private ones participating, PHCs and 25 emergency medical services centres participating in the quality learning centres. Good quality health infrastructure, including its maintenance is very key to achieving good quality public health service.

The national department working with provincial departments and their infrastructure departments will be delivering a lot of upgrades of infrastructure. In this financial year, an amount of R1,5 billion will be managed by the national department to support various infrastructure projects in various provinces especially in the NHI Pilot Project. With contracts already allocated for infrastructure upgrades Siloam District Hospital in Vhembe, Limpopo and the Zithulele and Bambisana Hospital in the OR Tambo District, in the Eastern Cape.

The contracts for the multi-billion-rand Limpopo Academic Hospital is already in progress the contractor should be appointed and we expect that the construction of this very

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important Limpopo Academic Hospital in Polokwane will start before the end of this year. In the past financial year, 51 clinics and community health centres were constructed or revitalized, and 21 hospitals were revitalized. In terms of backlog maintenance were done at more than 50 projects throughout the country.

In the current financial year, provinces will share R6, 8 billion in conditional grants which will be managed directly by the provinces under the Health Facility Revitalisation Grant Framework. to construct, revitalize, maintain hospitals, clinics and other facilities. Within this, we will also be taking forward the rehabilitation of the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital which was damaged by fire last year. We are also pleased to announced that water has finally been reconnected to the Umlazi's Prince Mshiyeni Hospital in eThekweni after the floods. Adequate staffing is very key to the improvement of quality service.

The Presidential Stimulus Package, which was announced by the President in 2020, as the intervention for Covid-19 was continued in 2021/22, and these enabled provinces to employ

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more than 73 000 additional staff, many of them on short-term contracts.

All provinces have experienced challenges in the current financial year as the allocated amounts for Covid-19 have been reduced due to the reduced burden of the pandemic. Additionally, 2 429 medical interns, community service personnel, amongst them doctors, nurses and pharmacists were employed. We are grateful for an additional R2,1 billion over the next financial year which has been allocated for us to be able to hire medical interns. This will make it easier for us to confirm the allocation of interns and medical community services doctors early enough so that there can be certainty.

Progress has been made in the employment of community health workers even though more work still needs to be done. Going forward, we have to make sure that we implement the 2030 Human Resources for Health Strategy. We hope to also finalise a more certainty in as far as the community health workers is concerned in terms of their engagement, even though all provinces have already confirmed the appointment of at least 47 000 community health workers. Hon members, this employment of the community health workers will help us in health

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promotion, prevention of disease, adherence to treatment for HIV and Aids, tuberculosis, TB, and non-communicable diseases.

A total amount of R5,4 billion is allocated in this financial year to support various aspects of health professions training in provinces, including additional personnel where necessary. We have made a lot of progress over the last 13-years in our fight against HIV and Aids. The Tembisa model estimates that 8 million South Africans were HIV positive in 2021 with prevalence of 13,4%. As on June 2021 the number of people on antiretroviral therapy, ART, was sitting at 5,4 million, meaning that there is still a gap of almost 2 million people who are estimated to be HIV positive but not on treatment. Our major concern is continued spread amongst young people, especially young girls. A key strategy is to provide widespread testing especially index testing of contacts, starts on treatment and maintain the treatment so that positive people can be virally suppressed. We make these services available at all points of care where the testing is done, including at mobile clinics.

Our target is to fight another 700 000 people who are estimated to be HIV positive during the course of this year to

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bring the total to above 6 million people. Our treatment coverage for those who know their status has suffered a lot during the covid lockdowns, we went down from about 85% to only 76% of those on treatment. Because of the pandemic lockdowns, we have not been able to reach our target of 90-90-90 in 2020. But we are recovering and we hope that we should be able to reach the 2025 target of HIV and Aids 95-95-95, but we must first reach the target of 90/90. An amount of R24 billion has been allocated.

I can see that my time is becoming a casualty. But I just want to say one or two more points in the area of reproductive health services. We also suffered from family planning services during lockdown but we are doing a lot to recover. Children immunisation also did suffer but a lot of catch up is being done.

Hon Chair, lastly, let me just say that we are doing a lot to do away with medical legal claims which are eating into our budget. In some of our province as high as R9 million in one financial year have gone to litigation. We have processes in place to make sure that this can be reduced. We are working with all the provinces.

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Hon members, I also want to say that even though we are working under a lot of pressure, we also appreciate the fact that there is a lot of excellence in many of our facilities. In this case, I want to recognise the Steve Biko Academic Hospital which received a Diamond Stroke Award, just last week during the 8th European Stroke Organisation Conference, for a stroke unit which is one of the best in the country and in the world. So, we say to our health workers you are appreciated. Thank you, hon Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon members, when I switch on my video you must know that you are left with one minute. It's just a warning to you that you should wrap up. So, don't let it intimidate you. Thank you.

Dr K L JACOBS: Hon Chairperson, Minister, the ANC rises in support of this report on the Budget Vote 18 on the strategic Plan and annual performance plan of the national Department of Health and its entities.

"Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have." That is a quotation from Winston S Churchill, more than 70 years ago. So, the question is how healthy are our

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citizens? The vision for the health sector is to ensure a healthy nation for all South Africans. Achieving a healthy population is not easy for any country, rich or poor. We are therefore not excluded.

The number of deaths from natural causes at a national level amongst persons 60 years of age and more is increasing slowly and is about 25% higher than predicted. There are gentle increases reaching above the upper prediction bounds of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

The morbidity profile comprises co-existing infections and noncommunicable diseases, including the new infection by the corona virus, commonly known as Covid-19, HIV and Aids, TB, other conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, vascular diseases, child diarrhoea, malnutrition and high levels of interpersonal violence and accidents. The risk factors for cardio vascular diseases are high in both urban and in rural parts of our country.

So, does this then put an obligation on us to provide a health care system that benefits every single man, woman and child in our country? The answer is very simple - yes, we do. The

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department has proposed to transform health through the introduction of the National Health Insurance, which will address the inequalities in our national health care system, to ensure that every South African has access to health care services, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

This is a critical policy imperative, which the ANC is committed to realise. The parliamentary process is at an advance state, where the desirability of the Bill is the next discussion point of the portfolio committee. We are looking forward to completing the process in the National Assembly.

The corona virus pandemic has tested the capacity and capability of our health care system. The pandemic tested the commitment and dedication of our health care workers and their resilience. It also laid bare the weaknesses in our health care system, such as our health facilities with capacity backlogs of infrastructure and health equipment.

The President, in his state of the nation address, outlined key priorities, which this Vote should respond to. A critical priority for health in the current conjuncture is overcoming Covid-19. Vaccines are proven to be the best available defence

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against illness and death from Covid-19. The vaccine rollout has so far seen 35 million dosages of Covid-19 vaccines administered.

The management of the pandemic displayed the capability of our government and its ability to crowd in the private sector participation in realising our national imperatives. This mirrors the integration that the NHI seeks to create.

For this purpose, this budget has allocated R2,1 billion to provinces for contracting primary health care providers and mental health and oncology service providers. The Budget Vote also responds to address communicable and noncommunicable diseases. TB, HIV and Aids and cancer remain a major cause of death in our country. It is also important that we consistently monitor our health through testing.

We welcome the support provided to tracking and tracing of patients lost, to follow up with TB and HIV, as traced by community health workers at 350 000 for the current year, and the department targets to start having 221 900 people on TB treatment. We also welcome the introduction of HIV cell screening to 200 facilities.

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There are clear interventions to mitigate any lost focus on these diseases due to the corona virus pandemic and we welcome this very much.

We acknowledge a progress reported by Stats SA in relation to the status of women's health in South Africa. Evidence from selected indicators in 2022 shows that the rate of HIV positive women who are already on ART at their first antenatal visit increased in all provinces. At national level, the rate increased from 61,7% in 2018 to 71,5% in 2020 in the country.

To have a sustainable health care system, it is critical to have adequate human health abilities. To improve our health outcomes, it requires well-trained health practitioners. The quality of health services has a direct impact on the extent of medical legal cases. These medical legal cases have a negative impact on the fiscal position of the department and undermine other prioritised programmes.

We need to ensure that our higher education institutions expand the health faculties to produce more doctors and other specialised health care skills, including all various specialists. We acknowledge and commend the strategic

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international co-operation such as the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro Medical Collaboration Programme, which was established in 1996 by President Mandela and President Fidel Castro of Cuba. We should expand and improve the quality of training of nurses, as a special emphasis.

Despite the challenges within our health care system, we should know that the 2021 General Household Survey by Stats SA reported that 72% of households said that they would visit public clinics or hospitals or other public institutions, while 27% would first consult private health care services. This makes this NHI Bill so much more imperative for the sake of the people who need to receive health care services within South Africa.

We have made progress in our priority to fight crime and corruption. The Special Investigating Unit submitted its final report on its investigation into Covid-19-related contracts. As a result, 45 matters with the combined value of R2,1 billion have been enrolled to the Special Tribunal. An amount of 224 government officials has been referred for disciplinary action, 386 cases for possible prosecution to the NPA.

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The department's entities such as the Compensation Commissioner for Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works, which compensates pensioners, ex-miners and for TB has been adequately supported by the budget. The Council of Medical Schemes, as an entity of the department, which ensures that beneficiaries of medical aid schemes are protected, and works towards creating an equitable cost-effective and low-costs services is worth mentioning. The entities under the department had performed well to their expected standards, although they experience limitations, especially financial limitations.

Restrictions have been lowered through ending the national disaster, as it relates to the health pandemic. This is a necessary intervention by government to balance protecting lives and livelihoods. The economy must return to optimal productivity.

We know that the threat of the virus continues to persist. The fifth wave is eminent, as we draw closer to our winter season. We are currently having over 63 000 active cases and infections have been increasing daily and this calls for special vigilance.

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We make a clarion call to all South Africans to maintain all required health protocols. Those who have not taken the critical step of vaccination, we urge you to be vaccinated, as this will protect your life. Scientific evidence and experience in our nation has proved that vaccines save lives. The drastic decline in mortality due to the corona virus is testimony to the significance of vaccination.

Finally, the portfolio committee had undertaken an oversight visit to the New Somerset Hospital, after the shooting incident at the hospital. We thank and commend the management and staff for their prompt and appropriate response to the incident and extend our condolences to the family members of those who have lost their lives. We dip our banner in honour of the brave member of the SAPS ... [Inaudible.] ... and nursing Sr Diane Seale, who put herself in harm's way to intervene at the time.

We support this Budget Vote because it recognises the fiscal constraints, through a balanced distribution of allocations to different programmes and entities. Thank you very much.

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Ms M O CLARKE: Chairperson, many South Africans are asking themselves if their government is a lost cause. When we analyse the Health department budget and the state of health care in South Africa under the ANC, we can see why South Africans feel that way. Fraud, corruption and maladministration has become the order of the day under the ANC governance. The Health department is a clear demonstration of how fraud, corruption and maladministration has destroyed public services for the poor. The health needs of the South African people exceed the capacity of the Health department. After 28 years it is clear that this government doesn't have the ability to fix it despite massive spending. What they have delivered is one of the highest inequality rates in the world. This too has a massive strain on the health system.

The lack of adherence to procurement processes has been the biggest contributing factor to COVID-19 corruption. South Africans saw repeated instances of grand theft of public funds by those entrusted to serve the citizens of South Africa. They knew no boundaries and continued to loot COVID-19 pandemic emergency funding without any remorse for those dying of this deadly virus or the millions who had lost their livelihoods due to the lockdown. After what we saw with COVID- 19

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corruption, can we honestly say that we have a caring government, or a government that cares about the poorest of the poor?

The Special Investigating Unit, SIU, had investigated 5 467 contracts awarded to 3 066 service providers with a total value of R14,3 billion. Investigations into 4 549 contracts that had been finalised of which 2 803 were found to be irregular. This means that 61,2% of all procurement was irregular.

Within programme two, an amount of R8,8 billion has been allocated to the National Health Insurance, NHI. Considering the massive irregularities in procurement and high risk of mismanagement of funds, the R8,8 billion of taxpayers' money being allocated to this programme will be at the risk to fraud and corruption as this programme has historically underspent and is prime for looting. The NHI should be scrapped in its entirety. The funding should be used towards solving the chronic problems in the sector such as infrastructure and skills development as well as ensuring that hospitals are capacitated to supply quality universal health care to all citizens within South Africa that depend on state health care.

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Considering the shortage of funds, we are already experiencing severe impacts on health infrastructure, filling of vacancies, offering of high-end care, waiting times at clinics and surgeries, availability of medication and the affordability of the NHI.

Since the initial costing of the National Health Insurance Bill, we have experienced a pandemic, economic decline and millions of job losses. South Africa's tax base has shrunk. A shrinking tax base highlights the increasing concern regarding the NHI's unaffordability now more than ever. Government needs to strengthen its health workforce. This has become critical. The budget for nursing services program has only increased by 1,3% in real terms. Considering that the vacancy rate for nurses is 21 453 and the vacancy rate for specialist medical personnel is sitting at 602. It is clear that the budget for the development of required nursing and specialised skills is not enough.

The current ratio for doctor to patient is 0,31 per 1 000 per residents - down from 0,79 per 1 000 residents in 2019. It is clear that South Africa has a dangerously low number of medical health practitioners and with the implementation of

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the NHI as well as the mass emigration we are experiencing it will only get much worse.

Despite these shortages, nurses have been left out of the critical skills list. All these horrific shortages of medical staff have a huge impact on the kind of health care the department provides.

On a daily basis, I get calls from desperate poor South Africans seeking help because family members in state health care facilities are not being taken care of. On Saturday, I had a call from a community member asking me to assist her. Her mother was admitted to Tembisa Hospital in early March with liver failure. Her condition was regressing yet the family had no feedback from the doctors taking care of her. I was getting in touch with the CEO of the hospital and I received a call from Entle to inform me that her mother had passed away.

It is heart-wrenching that families are not informed time and again of their loved ones when in distress in state hospitals as they simply do not have the nursing staff, doctors and infrastructure to provide decent health care due to budget

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cuts. Government must significantly ramp up the development of nursing and medical health professional skills in South Africa. The National Health Insurance will ultimately fail to provide equal access to quality health services under these conditions. It will become another failed state-owned enterprise, SOE.

The Health department's attempt to repurpose universal health care into the NHI will become yet another cadre enrichment machine as we have seen within Eskom, Denel and SA Airways, SAA. Be warned ANC, the trust within government is declining.

The country is at the beck and call of crooks and denouncing corruption, Mr President, will not work if these crooks do not find themselves in orange overalls. South Africans are not fools and there is a growing impatience in our country. Be warned ANC, your days are numbered within government. I thank you.

Dr S S THEMBEKWAYO: Chairperson, greetings to all leaders of the EFF, officials, commissars, fighters and ground forces of the only movement committed to the wellbeing of our people in the country. We are here today three years since the COVID-19

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pandemic struck us and expose the rot in our public health system. During this period all of us learnt the deaf to which the leaders of the ruling party are prepared to - to go on pursuit of their self-enrichment goals completely disregarding the health of the majority of our people.

Over 84% of the people in this country do not have medical insurance and are therefore dependent on public health. The past three years of COVID-19 pandemic have exposed that we do not have a public health system in the country. While nurses and doctors in public hospitals were crying for protective clothing at the height of the pandemic, Mr Zweli Mkhize was busy devising plans to enrich himself and his family from the pandemic.

Repeated cries for a more companionate government from the public servants such as the heart-breaking letter written by one nurse from S S Gida Provincial Hospital in Keiskammahoek, Ms Monica Mbewu, who decried lack of protective clothing for health practitioners, received no attention in the public health.

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This budget today indicates that there is no appreciation of the depth of the rot in the public health system. Sadly, it is a reality that the country's public health care system is plugged-in with leadership of the ANC. If it's not the blame everyone but the one who is in charge, Aaron Motsoaledi, the sticky fingers of Zweli Mkhize, it is the permanent state of slumber and laziness of the Minister Joe Phaahla. The Minister has been in slumber from his days as the Deputy Minister knowing nothing, accounting for nothing and depending on chairpersons of the portfolio committees to hide his incompetence under the guise of political allegiance and loyalty. Here we have the Minister who has to date led the country to a worse state of health care as yet. His entities are plugged with racism and sexism as encompassed by the National Health Laboratory Service, NHLS, who abuse black women senior scientists, Mpho Seleka being one of them, and blatantly refused to account.

We have the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority, Sahpra, which in his constant state of lies and deception mumbles over what they are saying over what they are doing. Two years later Sahpra has not yet done the work to save and protect our people from Johnson and Johnson surgical mess debacle because

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they eat Bill Gates money and would rather have women like Phindile Mcube be left with no choice but to completely remove their wombs because of the toxic transvaginal mesh devices.

While they do this, Sahpra is dead set against approving vaccines developed by companies from Russia and China. They are gambling with the health of our people in pursuit of factional scientific preferences.

The CEO of Steve Biko Academic Hospital unreservedly denied taking in the victims of forced sterilisation of black women whose wombs continue to leak because the government of the ANC which saw it fit to continue with eugenics in the body of black women. And I don't blame her she has been supposedly waiting for a go ahead from the department and the Minister who is obviously sleeping on the job and knows absolutely nothing about the current state of the department he is leading.

Infants are dying, new mothers are dying and patients are starving in hospitals. We have a shortage of doctors and nurses while thousands sit at home unemployed. Hospitals are burning, equipments in tertiary hospitals are not serviced or

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replaced when damaged. Women continue coming to hospitals with healthy pregnancies but leave with disable children because you have run public health care system to the ground.

We need free universal and quality health care for everyone. We need to properly train, employ and remunerate all health care workers in the country. We need to have public hospitals that are up to the task of servicing the health needs of the 86% of the citizens of this country who can't afford medical aid.

This budget is a business as usual-type of an arrangement by a government that has no clue of what we are dealing with. The EFF will never legitimise this department and its lazy Minister. We reject this budget. Thank you.

Ms M D HLENGWA: Thank you, hon House Chairperson. Hon members, health care in our country finds itself at an extremely difficult point. Even before the advent of the coronavirus disease 2019, Covid-19, our public health resources and infrastructure were not equal to the task of health provision in the country. In every respect, South Africa remains unequal in the provision of health care, which is a universal and

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constitutional human rights. In addition to these pressures, our health care services must contend with several regional and global challenges, such as illegal foreign nationals, escalating humanitarian emergencies, climate change and environmental degradation.

Most importantly, we are not over the Covid-19 crisis, and as we are about to enter this winter season, we are already noticing an upwards movement in respect of positive Covid cases. This will place our public health care system under renewed stress, which may last for the next decade, and which is why it is very important that we build a resilient and effective health care system. As a part of this resilience building, we must ensure not only human resources such as our medical professionals, doctors and nurses, but also medical equipment equity in all areas of South Africa. Why does the Health Professions Council of South Africa, HPCSA, still make it so difficult for our foreign qualified medical doctors to enter professional medical practice in South Africa, given that we currently have vacant posts for 1 339 doctors? What are we doing to prevent our medical professionals from leaving South Africa to practice medicine in other countries? We have 10 800 vacancies for nurses. Why are there shortages of

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medical cancer treatment in our rural areas? Why do our public hospitals continuously run out of necessary consumables, like antibacterial cleaning products, etcetera?

In such uncertain times, why do we not have sufficient capacity in respect of mental health care facilities? And why are we not using this period when we are all so heavily reliant on technology, to medically innovate in our health care field? How are we improving our public health care information and communications technology, ICT, capacity and what are we doing in order to ensure that all of our hospitals and clinics have alternative electricity capacity, as I think we can all agree that Eskom has truly failed us and it is only going to get worse.

House Chairperson, audit outcomes of KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape provinces require immediate intervention, as there has been little or no improvement over the past five years by these health departments, whose audits remain qualified. Unauthorised expenditure, and fruitless and wasteful expenditure are highest in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng. Why is this so? Let me tell you, House Chairperson, it is because there is no consequence management. Departmental

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officials can do as they please and disregard tender and procurement regulations.

House Chairperson, it is criminal that health infrastructure projects are delayed due to mismanagement, and poor oversight and project management, especially given the unequal distribution of health care infrastructure in our rural areas.

In conclusion, hon House Chairperson, health care equity must be prioritised by the government, and the digital transformation of the public health care system must be embraced in order to innovate, transform and build resilience into the sector. Universal access to health care must be available to all South Africans and the National Health Insurance, NHI, must be implemented in a model that is financially sustainable and achievable. The IFP supports the Budget Vote. I thank you.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Thank you, hon member. I'm Fikile Xasa taking over from hon Dyantyi. Can I now call the next speaker, hon Van Staden from FF Plus.

Mr P A VAN STADEN: Thank you, hon House Chairperson.

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Afrikaans:

Met 'n totale begroting van R64,5 miljard vir die 2022-23 finansiële jaar is heirdie regering en hierdie departement veronderstel om van die beste gesondheidsorg aan Suid-Afrikaners te lewer, maar wat gaan, soos met die vorige finansiële jare, met hierdie geld gebeur? Dit gaan weer gesteel word.

Die ANC-regering se magsbehepte maatjies gaan maar weer hierdie fondse plunder en steel. In November 2020 het hierdie departement onder 'n korrupsiestorm van nagenoeg R14 miljard gebuk gegaan. Die spesiale ondersoekkeenheid het 224 regeringsamptenare verwys vir dissiplinêre aksies, wat teen hierdie amptenare geloods moet word en 386 sake vir moontlike vervolging is na die Nasionale Vervolgingsgesag, NVG, verwys.

Die Digital Vibes-sage en die betrokkenheid van oudminister Zweli Mkhize is 'n baie mooi voorbeeld hiervan. Die probleem is egter dat mnr Mkhize nog absoluut geen verantwoording gedoen het nie en nog steeds in hierdie Parlement sit as 'n ANC-LP.

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Weens die swak dienslewering wat in die openbare gesondheidsorg plaasgevind het, het die Ouditeur-Generaal bevind dat daar 'n aansienlike styging in regseise teen die departement was.

English:

The Auditor-General also expressed concern regarding increases in unauthorised irregular fruitless and wasteful expenditure, and I quote: "due to disregard for legislation". How is it possible with Ministers, government officials and the department's constantly disregard legislation and do not obey the law, but nothing is happening to them? Because they are protected by a corrupt ANC government. It is time to send the ANC home.

Afrikaans:

Op infrastruktuurprojekte word dit in die verslag aangedui dat daar 'n aansienlike vertraging is in die lewering van projekte in sommige provinsies. Verder word daar ook daarop gewys dat sommige provinsiale departemente nie daarin geslaag het om projekte doeltreffend te bestuur nie, wat gelei dat potensiële vrugtelose en verkwistende uitgawes van nagenoeg R18,5 miljoen.

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Dit is geen wonder dat die probleme by die Charlotte Maxeke-hospitaal in Johannesburg die aflope tyd gesorg het dat die hospitaal nie bestyds sy deure na die brand kon heropen nie, en gelei tot 'n gemors in Gauteng wat ons die afgelope ruk sien afspeel het.

Dit was skokkend om te verneem dat hierdie projekte vertraag word deur bougehalte tekortkominge, swak bestuur van meldbare mikpunte, swak prestasie van kontrakteurs, swak beplanning deur die provinsiale departemente, swak projekbestuur en swak vakmanskap.

Die VF Plus trek die verslagdoening van die departement in twyfel, wat beweer dat daar die afgelope finansiële jaar, 40 fasiliteite en geboue in herstel was, dat 21 hospitale gebou en herstel gaan word en dat 'n verdere 121 fasiliteite opgegadeer gaan word.

Die portefeuljekomitee het die afgelope jaar verskeie hospitale regdeur die land besoek en elke keer het die VF Plus die swak infrastruktuur en instandhouding van die betrokke hospitale tydens hierdie besoeke uitgewys en beklemtoon. Dus, die departement se beloftes dat hulle op die opknapping,

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opgradering en bou van nuwe hospitale, gesondheidsentrums, klinieke en nuwe gespesialiseerde eenhede, insluitend onkologie gaan fokus, sal geglo word wanneer die portefeuljekomitee dit self kan sien, maar tot dan, bly dit maar net beloftes.

Die onsekerheid bestaan ook of meer fasiliteite word vir geestesgesondheids pasiënte gebou gaan, wat op hierdie stadium broodnodig is, aangesien die tekort aan hierdie fasiliteite daaglik groter word en daar nie nog 'n Life Esidimeni-tragedie mag plaasvind nie.

English:

By registering of 59 million people on the health patients' registration system as reported is not an achievement achieved, but rather a copy and paste overpopulation register. No achievement here at all. The decline for routine services for the past two years is a big concern and we receive on a daily basis more and more complains from patients who are still waiting since March 2020 for ... [Inaudible.] replacement to be conducted, but due to the government's Covid-19 regulations these patients are now in constant pain and still await their operations. It is no wonder what the

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diseases like tuberculosis, TB, and measles are getting out of hands. Matters like these are some of the reasons why the ... [Inaudible.] submit its comments against the proposed health regulations and ... [Inaudible.] for the withdrawal of these regulations and not promulgated into law. The public outcry against these regulations demonstrate that there is widespread opposition to the regulations and the FF Plus is of opinion that ... [Inaudible] comes down to nothing, but the transfer of power from one Minister to another. In this way the ANC is trying to maintain its abuse of power. It is time to send the ANC home.

Afrikaans:

Verder word geld wat nuttig gebruik kon wees in die aanstelling van verpleegsters en dokters, die betaling van verkryging van medikasie en broodnodige mediese toerusting en die uitbou van infrastruktuur, gemors en gestort in die bodemlose put van die Nasionale Gesondheidsversekering.

'n Verdere R8,8 miljard word weer in die NGV gestort. Die regerende departement het geen planne in plek om die vakante poste van verpleegsters en dokters in staatshospitale uit te wis nie. Intussen word miljarde rande in 'n stelsel gestort,

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wat poog om alle private gesondheidsorg in Suid-Afrika te nasionaliseer, in plaas daarvan om daardie fondse eerder te gebruik om meer verpleegsters en dokters aan te stel en die tekorte van mediese toerusting en medikasie uit te wis.

Daar moet bietjie bepaal word hoeveel hospitale en klinieke al gebou kon wees met al die miljarde rande wat reeds in die bodemlose put van die Nasionale Gesondheidsversekering gestort is.

Die VF Plus kan nie die begroting ondersteun [Onhoorbaar.] gestort gaan word in 'n bodemlose put van nasionalisering, korrupsie, wanbestuur, wan ... [Tyd verstreke.] Dankie. Ek het u nie gehoor nie.

Mrs M E SUKERS: Thank you, hon House Chair. The ACDP wants to extend our sincere condolences to the families of the patients who lost their lives in the shooting incident in Somerset Hospital. To the family of the young Constable Donay Phillips, who lost his life in the line of duty, we want to express our deepest sorrow for your loss - your loved one is among the hundreds of men and women who answer the call to service, and

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who in doing so pay the highest price. A grateful and humbled nation thanks you.

On Saturday, nursing Sister Diane Seale showed strength of character in the face of real danger, and in so doing gave us a lesson to emulate, crisis requires strong leadership, and that what is in you is revealed under severe pressure. Sister Seale showed us in the words of the, Chair, Dr Kenneth Jacobs yesterday that you can truly fight a war with nurses. This incident is evidence of a health sector that is in a permanent state of crisis, and therefore we must emphasise to the department and the Minister the need for competent strategic leadership to get beyond constant crisis management.

That this level of leadership is not provided is evident because we see that frontline health workers, like Sister Seale, have to display heroic leadership qualities, whether that is in everyday decisions or facing down armed assailants entering what is supposed to be a safe place of healing. Patients and frontline workers can't trust that they will be safe in your facilities, and the over 300 000 submissions that has been submitted on the new regulations on notifiable

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diseases indicates that the people of South Africa do not trust this department with any aspect of their health.

That trust can start being rebuilt by the portfolio committee showing that it is holding this department accountable for the R58 billion that the people of South Africa have allocated to it. The Auditor-General points out that some of the department's strategic plans are ambiguous and misaligned. The research capacity of the portfolio committee should be expanded to allow the portfolio committee to do proper oversight of the departmental strategy so that these flaws can be fixed.

To see how that, albeit flawed, strategy is executed on the ground, the committee has been asking the department for the last two years how it will hold provincial departments accountable. We are none the wiser today, Chair, and the question should be asked: is the national department merely a bank? And if so, why does it need such a large staff? The committee needs a regular schedule of engagements with the provincial Health departments in order to monitor them, and the department needs a more rigorous and time-based

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accountability model to monitor the provinces. Thank you, House Chair. [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH: Thank you very much Chair for giving us this opportunity. Greetings to the Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla, the chairperson and all members of the portfolio committee, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, heads of public entities that we work with, distinguished guests, government officials, ladies and gentlemen, we would like to start by saying that what the Minister has tabled that we support this Budget Vote 18 for Health so that we could be able to give and support South Africans the way we have done in the past in dealing with the quadruple burden of diseases and many other emerging diseases that we do find.

We note Covid-19 pandemic which came in and greatly disrupted some of the health services that we have been providing to our country. Hence the call by the Minister that let us ...

[Inaudible.] ... all the other programmes that we have been doing. Hypertension, diabetes, cancer and mental health are some of the non-communicable diseases that are a burden and that we need to work on. We should point out that over 80% of these commonly experienced non-communicable diseases are

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actually preventable, yet we still find quite a lot of that not being adhered to. We are grateful however that we are going back to these programmes. The Minister is planning to relaunch the campaign on the non-communicable diseases not very far from today.

On the current Medium Term Strategic Framework, MTSF, 2020-24 we have given ourselves a target of 25 million South Africans to be screened annually for high blood pressure and diabetes. We would like to commend and thank our health care professionals out there because we have surpassed the target. Last year we did 29 million screenings for high blood pressure and over 28,7 million for diabetes. However, what is important is what happens after screening. Do we actually take those with diagnosis for treatment? If you screen and not treat then it is not adequate enough.

We want to indicate the progress that has been made significantly by the department in all provinces on our flagship programme called Central Chronic Medicine Dispensing and Distribution. This is going on in eight provinces over 46 districts and 38 500 public health facilities. I would like to just indicate to you that a lady I met in Nongoma ...

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IsiZulu:

... eduze kwaseHlalankosi othe, weDokotela uDlomo lento yokuthi silande amaphilisi eduze kwasemakhaya ethu esihlala kuwona isisize kakhulu. Asisadingi ukugibela amatekisi, sigibela amabhasi. Sengikwazi nokunikeza umntwana ikhadi lami lokuthi uma ebuya esikoleni adlule enkulisa laphaya la engithola khona amaphilisi abe eseyangithathela khona. Isisize kakhulu leyonto. Ngeke sisashodelwa amaphilisi. Asisayi nasezibhedlela nasemitholampilo zonke izinyanga sesiya kanye ngonyaka. Siya kanye emuva kwezinyanga ezine. Leyonto iyasisiza ukuthi siqhubeke nemisebenzi yasemakhaya. Leyonto-ke ishiwo ...

English:

... over 5 million South Africans. A total of 5,1 million patients have enrolled in this programme since its inception in 2014-15, and it grows at about 750 000 per year and we actually do good savings.

On the issue of cancer programmes, we focus on the four main areas which are cancer oncology, the buying of the linear accelerators, the nuclear medicine radio therapy equipment rollout, the CT scan and cancer brachytherapy. We would like

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to indicate that there is money that will be spent on these programmes. Over R257 million has been allocated in the additional grant to six provinces to support their oncology services. One will be the Eastern Cape where there will be improvements on Livingstone and Frere hospitals by supporting them with replacement of linear accelerators. An amount of R20 million will be allocated to KwaZulu-Natal for the outsource programmes of oncology ... [Inaudible.]. We need to continue having the outsourcing programmes in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West. If we don't, they will continue having an impact on the central hospitals in and around Gauteng.

We would also like to say that there is a very important programme that the department has embarked on, which started in 2017, that focuses on Human Papillomavirus, HPV, vaccine. This programme is done in all our primary schools in girls of about nine years of age. Since 2017 to date, 1,5 million doses have been given to our girls as a first dose and 1,35 million as a second dose in Grade 4 or Grade 5. We have had a slight disruption with the Covid-19, however, that is going to accelerate now and increase in a very big way. We also focus

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on other cancers and not only these ones that I have just mentioned.

According to the World Health Organization, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on people's mental health. Some groups, including frontline workers, students and those with pre-existing mental health conditions have been heavily affected. We want to indicate that the common mental health problems like depression, anxiety, alcohol and other substance abuse will make it difficult to adhere to life saving medications for chronic conditions. However, there are programmes in the Department of Health. The department will be scaling up mental health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation to make sure we cover and focus on these. An additional 600 health professionals will be trained this year and we would also improve on our mental health infrastructure.

Malaria is a potentially life-threatening disease caused by blood parasites. We have just commemorated World Malaria Day two weeks ago in Mangweni community in Inkomazi Municipality in the province of Mpumalanga. This was part of our ongoing efforts to raise awareness about malaria risks.

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Hon Minister Phaahla is the current chair of the Malaria Elimination 8 initiative, E8, in Southern African Development Community, SADC. This means that South Africa is expected to do better and faster than the other countries in SADC. This is why we are actually pleased by seeing a decreasing number of new cases of malaria and decreasing deaths in the three main provinces where this is a burden.

As South Africa we need to champion the cross-border initiative of actually making sure ... Malaria can actually cross borders. So, we are not only looking inwardly but also assisting neighbouring countries like Eswatini, Mozambique, Botswana and the other neighbouring countries.

We would like to indicate that we are very pleased with the progress that we have made, in partnership with Home Affairs, in terms of birth registration in our health facilities. There are 391 health facilities with high volumes of mothers that have benefited from this programme. Just three weeks ago, with Deputy Minister Nzuza, we were in Newcastle to open one more site.

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Over a million deliveries are done annually in our public health facilities. These are mothers who do not have to queue in the Home Affairs offices, but while they are still in bed somebody comes on their bedside and give them the birth certificate that has already been generated in our hospitals. We could not have dealt with that during those days; it is only a caring government that can do that nowadays.

I have been given permission by Minister Phaahla to go to Cuba next week to, among other things, really look into the monitoring and evaluation of our programme the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro Programme. This programme has given us this. Just a few weeks ago I was in Mthatha and I met a specialist doctor in the most poorest district, OR Tambo, and he said to me, "Dr Dhlomo, we are very proud to indicate that this training that you have done has increased the capacity of medical doctors who are placed in the most rural hospitals and clinics." Right now, Thafalofefe, a place that maybe lots of the members logged in here don't know where it is, can now claim to have doctors who are supporting them. From the inception of this programme to March this year we have produced 2 556 doctors, some of whom are now specialists. This is actually a great achievement.

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On the public entities, we are an envy of Africa and an envy of the world with the work that has been produced by the National Health Laboratory Service, NHLS. Over this period, they have done 11 million tests on Covid-19, 8 million of those were on PCR and 3 million were on antigen rapid test. Overall, annually they have done 24,6 million tests of all other various tests that we need as a country with the amount of R8,8 billion that has come in there. So, they continue to work very well with the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and I am sure you are pleased with all the daily figures that we see coming through there. I think what was raised by hon Thembekwayo I would like to get some information to assist in terms of what she picks up as an unhappy statement with regards to NHLS.

On the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority, SAHPRA, we can actually say that to date, with high expectations from South Africa, they have been able to actually register three drugs; Pfizer, Johnson and Johnson and Sinopharm, and they continue to have Sinovac which is under emergency authorisation. So, that process is actually commendable. Yes, if there are challenges then we will always want to address and support them, including the work that was

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done by the South African Medical Research Council supporting us with the Sisonke Study because it was this type of study that was a precursor for us to be able to get vaccines into our country initially to our healthcare workers.

We are proud of a remarkable achievement by the Council for Medical Schemes where they intervened by registering a complain to the Competitions Committee about the high price of the Covid-19 tests. The intervention resulted in a price reduction from R850 to R500 - reflecting a 40% difference. Much more could be done if we continue to do such programmes through the Council for Medical Schemes.

The Office of Health Standards Compliance continues to be a watchdog for strengthening health systems, and we welcome everything they do in pushing for hospitals to really look like hospitals, clinics must really look like clinics, the smell in the hospitals and clinics must really be like the smell we know to be of clinic. If we continue to focus on this then it will definitely bring credibility to the call that is made of the National Health Insurance, NHI.

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We continue as a department to work with the Statutory Health Professional Councils, SHPC, the Nursing Council and the Pharmacy Council on the medical bureau. The Minister has led us to visit Eastern Cape, Mozambique and other countries, working together with the Mineral Council of South Africa, in terms of programmes that are there compensating former mine workers, which is something that is extremely important for their social profession and benefit.

In two days, we will celebrate the International Nurses Day with the theme "A Voice to Lead -Invest in nursing and respect rights to secure global health". The heroic display by a matron at New Somerset hospital where she put total health of her patients before hers, confirmed that we still do have, in our country, nurses who adhere to the spirits of Florence Nightingale, Cecilia Makiwane and Mary Mahoney. We will continue to support our health care workers despite the challenges that they face.

Let me then say to hon Dr Thembekwayo, I will be forwarding the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health together with by the Minister, a dossier that I have prepared with regards to what she raised about Ms Phindile Mncube. I have

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done everything humanly possible; I have referred her to the best of the best specialists in our country at Inkosi Albert Luthuli hospital. They have done everything humanly possible to attend to her problems, but let me not expand that until you see the dossier that I have prepared dating back from the time I saw and referred her to Steve Biko Academic hospital and also to Inkosi Albert Luthuli hospital and all that they have done.

We will continue to work hard towards building a resilient health system since this is a prerequisite for the National Health Insurance, and based on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, we have also been preparing to integrate provision of health services and harness our human and institutional capacity to deal with non-communicable and communicable diseases, including Covid-19. I thank you, Chairperson.

Ms H ISMAIL: Hon House Chairperson, the opening clause of the Freedom Charter says, "The people shall govern." Twenty-eight years into democracy, I am sure that the writers of the Freedom Charter never dreamed that under their ANC-led government that the health services that they dreamed about

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would be so dysfunctional. The past two years have been harrowing for most South Africans, who have experienced loss on a scale and magnitude that is almost unfathomable. If not for NPOs, NGOs, FBOs and the private sector providing extra resources and expertise, we would not have come out of Covid-19 as we did.

Despite government telling us that they are pro-poor, it would seem that the opposite is in fact the case. The Auditor-General has given the advice that there is no improvement in governance, procurement and project management with huge irregular and unauthorised expenditure. As a result, the poorest of the poor bear the brunt of abysmal management of our health systems.

In the last two years, the Special Investigative Unit, SIU has uncovered 45 matters to the value of R2,1 billion which have been referred to the Special Tribunal. About 224 officials face disciplinary actions while the 386 cases have been referred to the National Prosecuting Agency, NPA. This was money stolen from the system that they should have uplifted health for the poorest and most vulnerable but the fish rots from the top. Massive shortages of staff and critical skills,

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which do not even appear on government's most recent critical skills list, have resulted in shattered and exhausted nursing staff at most facilities.

Outdated staff structures, surgical backlogs, questionable disposal of medical waste, mismanagement at every level and non-payment of suppliers have led to a constant decline in health service delivery - with the poor and vulnerable feeling the pain and paying the highest cost. South Africa currently has a vacancy rate of 18,6% for specialist medical personnel and 13,7% for nurses. Yet, community service doctors are waiting to be placed.

How can we possibly deliver quality healthcare when there is such a shortage of staff? Those that are lucky enough to have a job are exhausted and overworked. Were it not for the dedication of South Africa's healthcare workers overcoming tremendous odds, many more thousands would have succumbed during the pandemic. The DA thanks you for your compassion, courage and hard work.

Mental health issues are on the rise due to Covid-19, joblessness, starvation and hopelessness. There are, however,

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insufficient facilities to assist individuals with mental health problems. Facilities are crumbling but R18,5 million has been wasted due to mismanagement of projects. New builds are plagued with poor quality building standards and a myriad of deficiencies. These must now be rectified on the taxpayers' bill, and at the cost of the poor and vulnerable.

The Office of the Office of Health Standards Compliance, OHSC is so understaffed. Currently only 8% of the public health facility is evaluated and monitored for compliance. Alas, the poor and vulnerable pay the brunt. The health system is in a crisis and on its knees. Act now, or pay the price. I thank you.

IsiXhosa:

Nks A GELA: Sihlalo weNdlu weThutyana, ndibulela ingxelo esiyifumeneyo kuMphathiswa wezeMpilo.

English:

The Department of Health manages the health systems which support the majority of South Africans. We applaud the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital for its gold award and the Gauteng province for the silver award. The healthcare sector

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in South Africa has been assessed and evaluated and numerous reports have reflected the challenges in the sector and required interventions which as the 2018 Presidential Health Compact. It committed stakeholders to contribute through the eight pillars which focus on improving the quality and efficiency of our healthcare system.

The National Development Plan, Vision 2030, NDP, described it as a problem of the performance of our health system despite the health expenditure at 9,1% of the GDP. This brings to the fore the quality of a health expenditure and whether the health system is producing health outcomes which are equal to the standards. Through the National Health Insurance, NHI, government seeks to address the market insufficiency which provides quality health care for a few and that results to a misallocation of resources in the health system.

All stakeholders should continue to play their roles as per recommendations of the Presidential Health Summit. We support the Budget Vote because its allocation responds to the policy priorities of the NDP. The budget supports the important programmes of the vaccination roll-out. In the previous budget the department committed that it would secure enough vaccines

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for all South Africans. Our government has realised that we should vaccinate to protect ourselves and others.

In our engagements with the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority, Sahpra, the entity demonstrated its efforts in ensuring that the health products are timeously authorised. They monitor and evaluate the clinical trials. Our regulatory body demonstrated urgently during the pandemic and the current budget support initiatives of strengthening the regulation of information management systems of the entity.

We have called Sahpra to strengthen its relationship with the Department of Science and Innovations to support innovations and development of pharmaceuticals. We welcome the entity's efforts on continuous partnerships with the international regulatory and the World Health Organisation. This strengthens the system which help maintain world health class standards. We have also recommended the promotion of indigenous knowledge system to provide support of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems, IKS initiatives as part of the science and innovation medical plan.

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We need to harness the ... [Inaudible.] wealth of knowledge and experience. Without effective regulation of the health consumable equipment and political economy, the cost can be exorbitant which will shrink the capacity of our health budget after instances it will make certain medicines to be not accessible for the poor. It is for this reason that the resolution of the ANC on the establishment of the pharmaceutical company. The state has established Ke Tla Phila to improve the security of supply for varying diseases by local manufacturers, the main active ingredient of South Africa. This is an important establishment in South Africa which become a critical player in future configuration of the health political economy.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has urged all countries to support a waiver of all trade related aspects of intellectual property rights which is known as the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement, Trips Agreement at the World Trade Organisation. This call consistent with transformation of the health political economy.

Another critical entity in our health system is SA Medical Research which demonstrated during the coronavirus that

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research development is the important capability of a nation. In this Medium-Term the entity ensured that 200 journals articles and books chapters are accepted and published by authors affiliated at or those funded by the council.

We applaud the scientists who have lived their true expectations of using science to respond to the humanitarian ... [Inaudibel.] ... caused by diseases and viruses. South African scientists have positioned the country amongst other nations of the world. Our researchers have shaped the global response to the pandemic.

Statistics SA reported Gauteng recorded a higher proportion of adolescents who visited mental facilities in 2019 and 2020. Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Limpopo had a lower proportion of adolescents who visited mental health facilities for both reported years. This signifies the importance of mainstreaming mental health across our facilities. We have observed a relative lack of support for mental related issues. We implore the department drawing from the lessons of implementation of the National Mental Health Policy Framework and strategic plan 2013-2020. The current Mental Health Policy Framework to be tabled this year should enable successive budgetary

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allocations for new mental health facility beyond the psychiatric services. All these programmes have a direct impact on the lives of the South Africans and we should build on our strengths and address weaknesses in the system through this budget.

The ANC supports Budget Vote 18 on Health because this vote urges us closer to realise the provision of quality universal health care. Of course hon Chairperson, we understand that the opposition will never support our budget and Minister ...

IsiXhosa:

... bayeke bakhonkothe, imoto engahambiyo iyachanyelwa zizinja. Ndiyabulela Sihlalo weNdlu.

English:

Mr K CEZA: Next time you must say signifies and not *signifees* [Mispronunciation.] ...

IsiXhosa:

... okanye uyibethe ngesiXhosa.

Nks A GELA: Hayi sukaa nihamba noo ndlebe zikhany'ilanga nina.

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Mnu K CEZA: Ewe, yenze ngesixhosa kaloku qha kube kanye, uyeke ubiza amagama ngendlela engekho apha.

English:

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Order, hon members. Hon Ceza, please.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you, House Chairperson, the NFP will support Budget Vote 18, Health, tabled here today. Allow me to start off by reminding our colleagues that on Thursday, 12 May, will be International Nurse's Day, and we call upon the Minister and his department to closely investigate the working conditions of nurses in hospitals and clinics across the country. Some of the conditions that nurses are exposed to, are appalling. It is a direct violation of the occupational hazard.

Now, House Chairperson, having said this, many years ago, in this particular House, I raised the issue of community healthcare workers, and there was an undertaking by the then President, Jacob Zuma, and ... [Inaudible.] ... approximately R1 300 a month at the stage, and had no benefits after 30 and 40 years of service, will be made permanent with full

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benefits. While some provinces had started it, I think it's under our Deputy Minister in KwaZulu-Natal, have started with the process, but the other provinces have been lagging behind, and that has not happened.

The vacancy rate amongst healthcare professional and the department has recorded that at 10 800 nurses, and 1 339 doctors, as previously raised. Now, having said this, House Chairperson, there is a lot of red tape, it appears, and in being accepted to serve the internships and things in the country. Now, given the fact that the lot of these doctors and experts are going to be required to ensure the success of the rollout of the National Health Insurance, NHI, should we not look deeper into this on how could we accommodate them, relax some of the conditions, if necessary? Of course, not putting anybody at risk, so that we will be able to successfully rollout the NHI.

About 21 000 specialist medical personnel posts remain vacant in all nine provinces. Now, we welcome some of the steps and initiative that has been taken by the department, however, I want to raise concern that not enough is been said and done about vaccines in the country, as a result of which, you would

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find, particularly the younger population, are not taking the vaccine, and we want to call upon the Minister, once again, to create some avenue to communicate the method and get the people to be more comfortable to understand that the vaccine will help to save lives.

In the absence of that, people are reluctant to take the vaccine, and that's why you have such a situation where most of the population is still not vaccinated up to today, posing a serious and great risk to others. The NFP will support this Budget Vote. Thank you very much.

Ms E R WILSON: Thank you, Chairperson, there is a proverb that says, "There is no pillow as soft as a clear conscience." I wonder if any member of the Department of Health, from the Minister, his Deputy, their cadres and any other senior member sleep comfortably at night. If you are, then certainly you do not have a conscience, and, given the state of Health in South Africa, I wonder. There are millions of poor people out there without food, water or sanitation. They are jobless and without hope. To compound their very sad plight, we add to their misery by being unable to assist them or their families when illness strikes.

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The sad reality is that not only are they not assisted in our public health facilities, you drive away any hope that they may have had. Let's take the lady at the Philadelphia Hospital, who was left lying in labour for four hours because there was not a theatre available for an emergency caesarean. Eventually, her uterus ruptured and her unborn child died. Not only did you steal her hope, you took away her baby too. How can you sleep at night? The poor lady who died of septicaemia at Steve Biko, because there were no colonoscopy bags, causing massive infections to her wounds. No one helped her. She died long before her time, leaving a stricken family without hope. How can you sleep at night?

The gentleman lying in hospital for almost a month with a gall stone obstruction, who had to wait until his blood levels were so extreme before they would book him a surgery. How can you sleep at night? At the Livingston Hospitals, surgery came to a grinding halt when major medical suppliers refused to deliver to them because their accounts had not been paid. The only available water at the Letsitele Clinic is from a borehole riddled with e-coli and bacteria, because there is no budget for them to pay the municipal debt. How can you sleep at

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night? It is little wonder that this department is facing over a R100 billion in medical legal claims?

Ms J TSHABALALA: Hon Chairperson, I am standing on a point of order.

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D XASA): Can I get what the point of order is?

Ms J TSHABALALA: Thank you so much, hon House Chair. House Chair, I want to ask the member, is she insinuating that the Minister had killed people? If that is the case, she is out of order because she can't say, how does the Minister sleep at night almost as if he kills people. That is out of order, Chairperson. Can you look at it and come back to the House?

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D XASA): Let me look into it and come back. Okay. Can we allow the member to continue?

Ms E R WILSON: Thank you, Chairperson. It is little wonder that this department is facing over a R100 billion in medical legal claims, almost as much as the entire year budget. In the 2020-21 fiscal year, the Eastern Cape Department alone had to

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pay over R920 million in claims. No wonder their accounts are not paid. The total paid out for 2018-19 claims was close to R2 billion. This money could have been used to build and improve on health to uplift the poor and vulnerable. Instead, it had to be used for the damages that the department caused. More than half of these, were as a result of cerebral palsy and deliveries resulting in poor children being challenged for the rest of their lives

The Auditor-General has warned about not compliance of procurement procedures and performance, so have the portfolio committee, year, on year, on year, and yes, we have listened to your speeches here today. You came here today with a barrel of cow pat, covered in syrup, no amount of sugar coating changes the pat, cow pat is cow pat, and you are knee deep in it. You are far away from dealing with the real health crisis, that is, it has collapsed. Chairperson, I close with another quote: "People only get mad and defensive about certain topics when they know they're guilty." I wonder how well did you sleep last night?

Mr T B MUNYAI: Hon Chairperson, hon members and the people of South Africa, and all protocol observed, let me start by the

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Freedom Charter's clause 101 - the eighth clause of the Freedom Charter on health which states that there shall be houses, security and comfort. To be relevant, a preventative health care schemes shall be run by the state; free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with the special care for mothers and young children. The aged, the orphans and the disabled, and the sick shall be cared for by the state. That was Freedom Charter clause 101. The scheme that we referred to, that will be run by the state is the National Health Insurance which is under progress in Parliament. So, that is how we govern.

Let me start with the physical framework. The physical structure enshrined in the Constitution which in section 40 established a national, provincial and local spheres of government, which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated has led to some of the fragmentation and disconnection in a manner in which limited financial human and also infrastructure resources are utilised to the greater good of South African citizens. Due to historical distribution of the population there has been some challenges in ensuring effective, equitable and efficient allocation of the health sector resources to address the population's health needs.

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Our national health care system is also constrained by the number of patients purported to be foreign nationals and who are also not accounted for in the planning and budgeting which constraints our resources. In this context, we shall continue to serve these foreign nationals, consistent with the United Nations, UN, Convention, especially with emergency services and not viable diseases. We welcome the commitment by the Minister of Health and of course, encouragement on the annual performance plan and the budget that is working on investigating to what extent and the usages of the health care services by undocumented foreign nationals and what intervention needs to be taken forward. It would be important that government accelerate this review and consider other services of revenue to augment the strained fiscal space in represented provinces.

In this regard, in this context, the ANC put forward unwavering support on Budget Vote No 18 and we shall play our robust oversight role to ensure that the department improves governance, particularly at the coalface of services in our hospitals and clinics across the Republic. As we know, COVID-19 has brought the unprecedented havoc that South Africa and the global humanity has ever seen. The collective response

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vaccination programme is a critical preventative intervention that was way above and beyond the country's expectation and satisfaction. With a strong sense of patriotism, we salute and pride ourselves to congratulate the Ministry and the Department of Health on the excellent work that they have done in the past two years in their battle against COVID-19.

The World Health Organization Director-General, after visiting South Africa congratulated Minister Dr Joe Phaahla and the country for the great work that South Africa was doing in combating COVID-19. Of course, the blind will not see this great progress. We must underscore that no economy can grow sustainably without having a healthy workforce.

It is within this context that we salute our health care workers who are the backbone and the lifeblood of our health care system, and who fought side by side in combating COVID-19. We can only guarantee the good health of our people because the health care workers are very critical to our health care system. After celebrating the International Workers' Day, we wish to encourage you South African workers and also the international workers with the old, of course,

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Marxist message from Karl Marx, "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains." Aluta continua!

We need to ensure that all other programmes that had been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic must receive the necessary attention they deserve as practical and urgent as possible. In this regard, we support the Department of Health to eliminate malaria by 2030. Unashamedly, we have an obligation to transform the health care sector of South Africa, which is the fundamental necessity. We must put on record that since the pandemic, we are facing the numerous internal and external risks which affect the strategic and technical capacity of our developmental state to deliver on the quality of health care.

With regard to the National Health Insurance, NHI, hon Chairperson and the people of South Africa, the development and maintenance for the past 28 years, the ANC-led government has built many hospitals and clinics. Going forward, we are concerned about provision of the quality of care. In this regard, with related infrastructure development, but also the challenges remain the dual health care system, the people of South Africa agree that we must implement the National Health

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Insurance fund, serving as a single ... [Inaudible.] ... and single payer of health care services to ensure equitable and fair distribution and use of the health care services to all our people.

The people of South Africa agree that we must address the disparities through health financial reforms through the National Health Insurance fund. The road towards the Universal Health Coverage will not be a simple one, because it requires the eradication of structural challenges due to the injustices of the past which affected our health care system until to this day. The beneficiaries of the apartheid are not going to give up without fighting against the NHI. Those who represent the *laissez faire* and the big business ... [Inaudible.] ... the NHI, do not want NHI because of greed and corruption. We have seen the 2019 Rugby World Cup that when the big businesses do corruption, they said is collusion, yet we know that this is corruption.

The people of South Africa agree with the White Paper not in that National Health Insurance is a health financing system that is designed to pull the funds to provide access to quality, affordable personal health services for all South

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Africans based on their health needs irrespective of the socioeconomic status. The NHI intends to ensure that their use of the health services do not result in financial hardships for individuals and their families.

It is imperative that we assert and quote President Ramaphosa in line with the NHI White Paper, "NHI represents substantial policy shift that will necessitate a massive reorganisation of the current health care system. Both public and private sectors also drive the mandate from the National Development Plan of our country." The people of South Africa agree that we should defend this democratic policy gains despite the forces opposed to progressive change seeking to divert us from the advancement of the national democratic revolution. The people of South Africa and the ANC agree that we must play our robust oversight role to ensure that the department improve on governance, particularly on the coalface services of hospitals and clinics.

Hon members and the people of South Africa, we must agree that the government have a long-term vision and a plan. This Budget Vote contains in it the National Health Insurance programme which will really help us to focus on the areas of the NHI.

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And this budget targets about 5,5 million patients registered in the central chronic medication dispensation, as the Deputy Minister said. We need to support that programme.

As part of the phase-in implementation of the NHI, we need to address the infrastructure gap and maintenance of the current health infrastructure. Over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, R8,8 billion has been allocated through the National Health Insurance Indirect Grant. With regard to the expansion of the health services in rural areas, new clinics and hospitals need to be build. The people of South Africa and the ANC agree that we will ensure that the department should finalise and monitor the implementation of the human resource health strategy and a plan for 2019 to 2024 to ensure that vacancies are timeously filled, including all clinical and nonclinical and senior level positions.

The year 2022 should be the last year of the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and sexually transmitted diseases, STI, 2017 to 2022 has been deferred to 2023. This issue the Ministers clarified that they have not realised this target of the National Strategic Plan in areas such as the 1990 target to ensure that 90% of our people

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infected with HIV should know their status. Ninety per cent of those who have tested positive should be able to be sustained on treatment and 90% who are on treatment should be virally suppressed. This issue the hon Minister has covered in his own presentation. There are important targets towards eradicating HIV, TB and STIs. We must say that by 2021 we have seen progress. The state-owned enterprises, SOEs, of the Department of Health has made progress. The majority of them have received clean audit during the year under review. It is critical to align the progress of key health outcome measurement. With regards to maternal mortality as raised by the Deputy Minister and the facility ratio nationally, this ... [Time expired.] Hon Chair, we support this Budget Vote unwaveringly. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HEALTH: Hon Chairperson, firstly let me thank all the hon members who have made their contribution to this Budget Vote, thank all those who have supported our Budget Vote. I will just comment on a few matters which have been raised by hon Hlengwa on the issue of medicines stock out. That is the matter which we are monitoring through our Stock Visibility System. We will make sure that if you could also give us some warning in the areas which you might be aware, we

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have this system, which, but the system also depends on those at the coalface making sure that they report on their stock levels, and reporting on the system and then it can fit in where we were able to monitor.

Also, in as far as the audits, the problems of qualified audits, I think at least at this stage, none of our departments in the provinces have disclaimers. So many are still struggling with qualified audits. Our financial division from the chief financial officer's office does work with, they have got a forum of Chief Financial Officers, CFOs through which they compare notes and look at the areas which are perpetually problematic, including the kind of unauthorized expenditure, for instance, as a major cost of a qualification by the Auditor-General. I think hon Dr Thembekwayo, aside from the insults, I think where there are some issues of substance, the Deputy Minister has adequately answered and he will be providing further information in some matters which you have raised.

Hon Van Staden and others have raised concerns and hon Van Staden claims the budget is going to be stolen. I am sure, even him, he is aware that he is exaggerating a problem which

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is there in terms of sometime where public resources are not properly utilised. But we do have the systems through which we monitor, and I can also just add to say that, other I think hon Ismael made reference to the issues of poor governance and corruption, but what they do not admit is the fact that many of these areas have been exposed and put through to the Special Investigating Unit, SIU, by our government through the proclamations by the President who signed these proclamations that these matters should be investigated. That is why the public is aware and all these reports, once they are released, they are made public. That is not acknowledged. I am sure it is not very comfortable for members from the opposition to acknowledge that this ANC government working hard and committed to making sure that where there are irregularities, poor governance and corruption, it is pursued, and whatever findings they are not swept under the carpet, but they are made public. Hon Shaik Emam, the issues of community health workers, we are quite far as you might be aware that these interim agreements with labour unions in terms of where there is some certainty in terms of the benefits of community health workers. There are still matters, which through the Public Service Bargaining Council, some of the matters are still being thrashed out to make sure that there can be even more

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certainty in terms of the role. But we are unwavering in our commitment to make sure that community health workers are well integrated into the public health system because as I have said, they are very key in various areas of health promotion, prevention of disease, making sure that those who we have lost, to follow-up or treatment of chronic diseases, including HIV and TB can be traced and put back on treatment.

The issue of litigation again, hon Wilson, just to sift out, you know, this kind of personal attacks, but on the substantial issues, the issue of medical litigation is a major issue. Indeed, some of our provinces are struggling as a result of major problems of leakage from the litigation. And as I have mentioned, we are making sure that we close the tap on all of this. As I conclude, let me just say again that while it has been a difficult two years, we are very confident that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We believe the pandemic is moving closer to its end and we should be able to, with all the experience, all the interventions, we should be able to control the impact of the pandemic. And, as we do that, make sure that we can build a sustainable and resilient health service. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

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RULING

The ACTING HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr F D Xasa): Before we conclude the business, there was a point of order and I think the point that should have been in terms of Rule 85 on the insinuations that were alleged. Yes, there is an indication that there were such a statements, but what is not clear is to who were they directed to. But I am sure from the comments of the Minister we can note that in terms of Rule 85, members are prohibited from indicating any such issues related to members. So we can stop it by saying, we are urging members to avoid indicating things they may not substantiate. So that is the ruling for now. We are unable to say exactly whether this was directed to the Minister or to whom.

Debate concluded.

The mini plenary session rose at 16:03