

# Motsoaledi says NHI isn't being sidelined

Despite pushing the National Health Insurance (NHI), the National Department of Health only spent 10.4% of the indirect grant allocated to the programme for the 2018/2019 fiscal year by the middle of the year, or September 25.



Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi

None of the R491m grant allocation for priority health programmes, such as school and mental health services, had been spent by October 25. Only 15% of the R160m budget for patient information systems had been spent, while a mere 29.6% of the R360m budget for the chronic medicine dispensing programme had been disbursed.

“I really don’t regard it as underspending. It was a strategic way of solving problems that are here and now,” Health Minister, Aaron Motsoaledi told a University of Stellenbosch Business School event.

However, following his statement, Motsoaledi [told \*ewn\*](#) that reports that the NHI will be put on the back burner as the Health Department reprioritised its budget are false.

## Reallocating

The Treasury redirected R546m from the grant to meet President Cyril Ramaphosa’s commitment to fill 2,200 critical health vacancies and purchase beds and linen, which he made when he announced his economic stimulus package in September.

While the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement set aside R350m for the remaining period of the 2018-2019 fiscal year to hire critical healthcare staff (442 medical interns, 100 medical officers, 421 registrars, 100 specialists, 200 nurse specialists, 1,000 nursing assistants, and 500 enrolled nurses), while R150m will be used to purchase linen and beds.

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## R500m to recruit health professionals, buy beds and linen

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