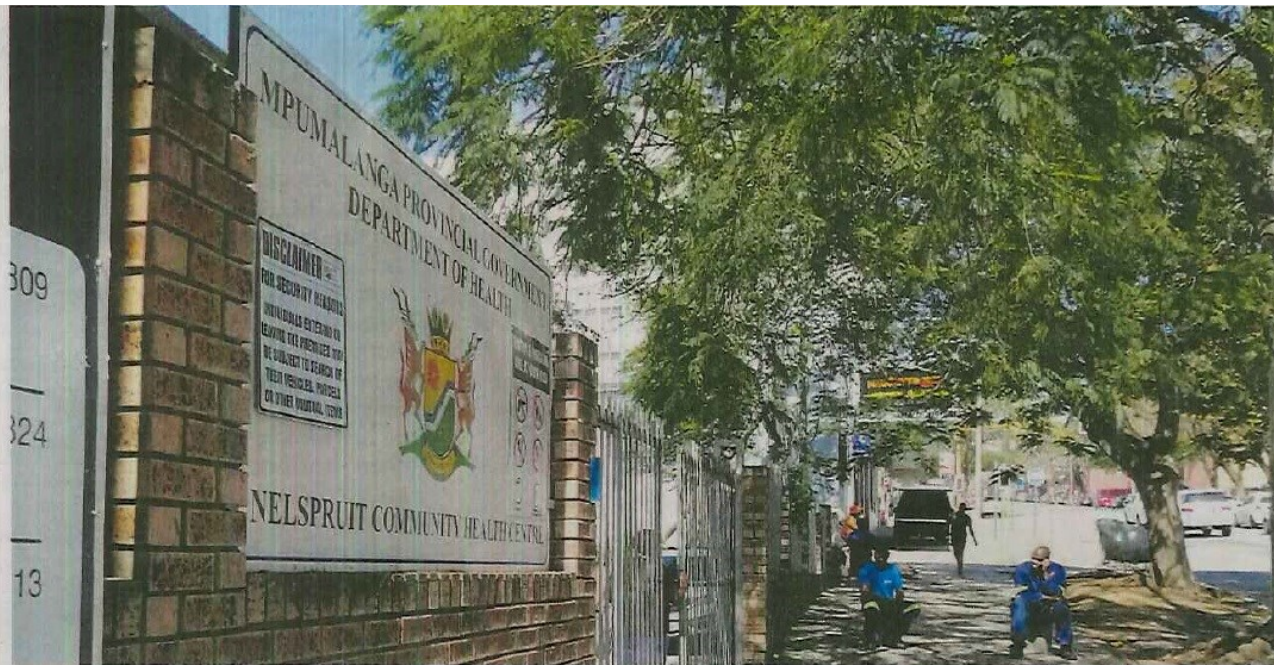




The community are urged to make sure they have their say about the proposed NHI Bill.

# Have your say on health Bill

**Enver Wessels**

**MBOMBELA** - The public has until October 11 to raise their concerns about the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill.

The introduction of the bill has raised fears in South Africans in the midst of an ailing health sector, sparking concerns about where and how government intends to obtain the funds to finance the NHI.

Mike Schussler, owner of economists.co.za, shared his thoughts on the bill with *Lowvelder*.

"It does not give any costing or tell us what the state will cover. It may cover a broken arm, but not cover diabetes type 2, then we can

assume it will have to cover at least what current medical insurance does.

"If this is the case, then we can go on the following: The current public health costs R4 400 per person a year. Private medical schemes are about R19 500 per person per year."

He said this means government would have to procure medical goods at a cheaper cost, citing the unchanged numbers of doctors, nurses and specialists, adding that there will be a mass exodus of professionals in the sector.

"We will see the cost per public health person go up and the other go down. It will be very expensive, and the person on private medical insurance will get far less."

Schussler estimates that introducing the NHI would mean an increase in total health costs from eight to nine per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). This indicates that at 10 per cent of the GDP, the state's contribution would have increased from four per cent to nine per cent.

"That means nearly all the money going to medical insurance from the private people will have to be collected as taxes. The tax to GDP ratio will have to increase from about 27 per cent GDP to about 31 per cent. That means the PIT (personal income tax) of 10 per cent of GDP will have to increase, and it is already one of the highest burdens in the world, if about half comes from this, meaning two per cent of GDP. That means we will

see an effective 20 per cent increase in PIT. The value added tax rate may also have to increase from a 15 per cent to an 18 per cent rate," he concluded. The public are called to have their say on the bill, which chief operating officer of the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism (KLCBT), Linda Grimbeek, pleaded with locals to do.

"I would like to encourage - no, I want to beg you, to please take this seriously. Not only about the National Health Insurance bill, but in all other matters that may arise.

"This is why it is extremely important that you make comment and make your voice heard, as an individual. Please do not think we have no rights left if nobody is listening - they do, they have to, if you speak up.

"KLCBT also requests to make a presentation at the provincial public participation hearings - these carry a lot of weight and is an opportunity we cannot miss."

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Anyone wishing to make their voice heard on the NHI can make a written submission to Vuyokazi Majalamba. It should be addressed to the Portfolio Committee on Health, 3rd floor, 90 Plein Street, Cape Town, 8 000, emailed to [vmajalamba@parliament.gov.za](mailto:vmajalamba@parliament.gov.za) or faxed to 086-694-3279 by October 11.

Copies of the bill are available from Majalamba on 021-403-3770, 083-709-8522 or at [www.parliament.gov.za](http://www.parliament.gov.za).