

Story: [Medical aids are out under the GNU — even if it means the end of the GNU](#)

On 23 August Bhekisisa published a [print story](#) that captured an in-depth interview Mia Malan conducted with Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi for Bhekisisa's monthly TV show, Health Beat, on the state of the country's public health system and the National Health Insurance. The story was published along with a video (10 minutes) which captured the part of the interview that the print story was based on. The video was edited by Anna-Maria Lombard and Thatego Mashabela and filmed by Yolanda Mdzeke and Ruan Visser.

The interview revealed exclusive information about the minister's lack of willingness to negotiate on a section of South Africa's National Health Insurance (NHI) Act which will make private medical aids in their current form illegal once the NHI has been fully implemented — at the cost of democracy in the sense that he's prepared for the country's government of national unity to collapse rather than to negotiate. This has resulted in the business sector and private healthcare industry, amongst others, reluctance to buy into the universal health coverage scheme.

Our story received 204,000 pageviews and 174,000 unique visitors on our website within a week after publication; this is comparable to the traffic that large mainstream publications in SA get for high-profile political stories. The [YouTube video](#) got 40,000 views.

In addition to this, our story was republished, mostly as the [lead or second lead story](#), by five mainstream publications — [Daily Maverick](#), [Financial Mail](#), [News24](#), [TimesLive](#), [BusinessLive](#) — and [used prominently](#) in the newsletters of each publication. It was [the top-read story on News24](#) for Friday, 23 August, and most of Saturday, 24 August. On Monday, 25 August, it was [the second most read story](#) on Financial Mail.

Moreover, our article framed how nine mainstream media organisations covered the NHI and which parts of the NHI they chose to focus on. Three mainstream publications — [News 24](#), [Business Day](#), [Daily Maverick](#) — published editorials angled around the medical aid issues with our story directly quoted, and another three publications — [Business Day](#), [BusinessTech](#) and [Netwerk24](#) — produced news stories in which our article was referred. Two primetime shows on leading radio stations — John Maythem's afternoon drivetime show on [Cape Talk](#) and Stephen Grootes' Money Show on [702](#) — initiated interviews with influential industry players and quoted our article. Moreover, [Eyewitness News](#) wrote a print story based on Maytham's interview and the national current affairs TV station [eNCA](#) spoke to an industry player.

Lastly, our story set the agenda for decision-makers to put pressure on the minister to be more inclusive. Within an hour after our story went live, the second largest party in the government of national unity, the Democratic Alliance, [issued](#) a press release warning the minister that the government could fall apart, should he refuse to consult, as promised when the GNU was formed.

University of KwaZulu-Natal pharmacist Andy Gray, who has a listserv with a wide range of health policymakers as subscribers, [circulated our story](#), the national health department

[published](#) it on [their Facebook page](#) and the DA [issued](#) a press release within an hour after our article went live.

On social media, decision-makers such as Discovery Vitality CEO, [Dinesh Govender](#), public sector clinical psychologist [Suntosh Pillay](#), and Citizen News editor, [Bobby Ramakant](#), retweeted the story with comments.

Business Unity SA, that is considering court action with regards to the NHI used the story to inform their action: “Your insights into the reporting on NHI have been enormously helpful for BUSA. It is always of benefit to know what government is thinking; this helps our thinking, our approach and our engagement with senior officials. Also, there are not many journalists who are able to have such open discussions with a Minister, and that is always welcomed,” says communication officer Sandra Sowray.

Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi referenced our and the consequent stories in his [address](#) to the International Pharmaceutical Federation Congress in Cape Town on 2 September. He was defensive about his statements, but it was clear that he started to feel the pressure to start consulting about the NHI.

Finally, the story resulted in Bheksisa’s newsletter getting about 40 more subscribers. We sent out a [newsletter](#) breaking down the impact and also [published](#) an article.

Editorials:

New24, Carol Paton

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/opinion/carol-paton-nhi-how-strong-is-minister-motsoaledis-arm-20240829>

Natasha Marrian, Business Day

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/health/2024-08-26-news-analysis-politicising-sas-health-through-nhi/>

Daily Maverick, Stephen Grootes

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-08-28-state-of-the-union-cloudy-but-fairly-stable-in-spite-of-provocations/>

News stories:

Tamar Kahn, Business Day

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/health/2024-08-27-nhi-will-prompt-exodus-of-top-tax-payers-irr-warns/>

Staff writer, BusinessTech

<https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/788042/the-end-of-medical-aid-in-south-africa-non-negotiable-motsoaledi/>

Hanlie Stadler, Netwerk24

<https://www.netwerk24.com/netwerk24/sake/geldsake/mediese-fondse/ngv-belangriker-as-rne-d-a-eis-motsoaledi-se-kop-oor-skokkende-stellings-20240823>

Broadcast stories:

John Maytham, Cape Talk

<https://www.ewn.co.za/2024/08/27/what-role-for-medical-schemes-once-nhi-is-implemented>

Stephen Grootes, The Money Show

https://omny.fm/shows/the-money-show/the-money-show-unpacking-the-census-report-malulek?in_playlist=podcast

Eyewitness News

<https://www.ewn.co.za/2024/08/27/what-role-for-medical-schemes-once-nhi-is-implemented>

eNCA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCr0UXLIOLQ>

Newsletters:

DM newsletter:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#starred/WhctKLbFcFZntHNhSNgxPFzhMDrkVWcGfPLwmqSvFwcBGTdJqPIBsvvFwgZDKdhPsfpbskL>

Business Maverick newsletter:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/WhctKLbFcFZtvJLRzqlsFQfLzLsRwnvmwtpnJqFSmbWtCfdmdDjMgfHVpBvnnlJSqwIHtv>

Decision-makers:

Andy Gray, UKZN

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#starred/WhctKLbFcFBffFWNgJwwCqRCXzmzICZwXwpLPNSzBQKTtPMqSfWwGSCTRqjjgrdXGrXGgL>

National health department

https://www.facebook.com/story.php/?story_fbid=927309279442146&id=100064892462120&rd

DA press release

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/WhctKLbFcFJzkQfRHFhtPxXgmfQNjnvSMqDIRsZbIPcRrMswxgFCLhvcZJChMZSNTgzWpJV>

Social media (decision-makers):

[Bobby Ramakant](#) @CNS_Health, 6 607 followers.

Bobby Ramakant | बॉबी रमाकांत
@bobbyramakant

#RecommendedRead: #SouthAfrica's Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi on rollout of National Health Insurance

Thanks 🙏 to @Bhekisisa_MG's team of @miamalan, @niekerk_an76068, @JessicaPitchfo5, @yolandamdze, Thatego Mashabela, Ruan Visser)



From bhekisisa.org

6:46 AM · Aug 26, 2024 · 1,024 Views

[Suntosh Pillay](#), clinical psychologist, 6,658 followers

Suntosh Pillay
@suntoshpillay

Incredibly useful reporting, as always, by @miamalan @Bhekisisa_MG on NHI.

Health Minister says NHI is a deal-breaker for the GNU - and that medical aids will only provide non-NHI services, whether the DA likes it or not.

We will listen on the radio 🎧



From bhekisisa.org

11:16 AM · Aug 24, 2024 · 390 Views

[Dinesh Govender](#), CEO, Discovery Vitality, 3372 followers



Notes:

Extra republications:

<https://www.medicalbrief.co.za/politicising-sas-health-through-nhi/>

<https://www.medicalbrief.co.za/motsoaledi-stands-firms-on-medical-aids-under-the-nhi/>

<https://explain.co.za/2024/08/23/medical-aids-are-out-under-the-nhi-even-if-it-means-the-end-of-the-gnu>

Google alerts (Mia Malan)

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#starred/WhctKLbFcFZqthTpFFSVdqBLFQDKTqccmgdTMBcJhwWgzjZzLTxrCrxGtjxwCTqNDCWLnq>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#starred/WhctKLbFcFZqtQwcmfFIPPMXDKgxIRzsnZPMPtMmRtZxrXIZHcWSWTbRrmXpXhkqcBZNqpQ>

