

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA cautions that NHI should not be used for electioneering towards 2024
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) representing thousands public servants is concerned that Government is using the introduction of the National Health Insurance (NHI), as an election campaign strategy with no improvements to the healthcare in South Africa. The current single funding model for the NHI will plunge the citizenry into a deeper financial crisis as they will be burdened to fund this initiative. The idea that workers might be expected to pay for private medical insurance and the NHI simultaneously, induces anxiety amongst public sector employees.

The chief priority of health reform in South Africa should be the rehabilitation of the Public Health Sector. This can be best achieved by a competent, non-partisan public health service, free of corruption and political interference. The two-tier system of healthcare in South Africa is not the cause of problems in the Sector or the demise of the private sector health system through the introduction of a single purchaser model of the NHI. The PSA calls for a progressive realisation of the right of access to healthcare within the resource constraints of the state. The PSA is of the view that the NHI Bill was rushed and believes that more consultation is needed to collectively agree upon a model, which will ensure effective and sufficient healthcare to all citizens without putting an additional burden on already struggling public servants and the possibility of losing their medical aid subsidy's which they qualify for. The PSA knows that the failure to address skill shortages in the healthcare system will cause NHI to fail before its even implemented.

The PSA is also concerned regarding the future of medical schemes, especially as it relates to employees' access to medical aid schemes. The introduction of the NHI may reverse the gains workers have made thus far in respect of access to quality healthcare. While the PSA pledges its support to the rehabilitation of the Public Health Sector, the PSA's view is that members, like other citizens, must reserve the right to choose whether to use public or private healthcare. This choice must not be detrimental by imposing an extra tax burden on employees. The choice should include whether to subscribe to a government related medical aid scheme or a private one.

The PSA calls on the President to reconsider this Bill and allow further discussions to clarify all these unanswered questions and concerns raised by all relevant stakeholders. If the President is not going to listen to the stakeholders, the NHI will be a dead elephant just like E-tolls.

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