

NHI no utopia for health system – AfriForum 9 June 2019

AfriForum condemns the announcement by Dr Zweli Mkhize, the new Minister of Health, that the National Health Insurance (NHI) plan must be implemented as soon as possible. Mkhize said at a press conference today that it is not a question of whether the NHI would be implemented, but rather when, and that this system would eradicate inequality in health care. Mkhize's promises of an Utopia for the South African health system is however simply a smokescreen for the ANC to further its communist agenda.

"The vast majority of state hospitals and clinics do not comply with medical standards. That is why the state health sector spent up to R56 billion (a quarter of last year's budget for health services) for the payment of negligence claims. It is a clear indication that the government cannot even properly manage the state health sector. This interference in the private health sector is contrary to free market principles and will eventually lead to the total collapse of the industry," says Natasha Venter, Campaign Official at AfriForum.

Despite this, Mkhize is of the opinion that all issues in the Department of Health need not be resolved before the NHI is implemented. "According to the Auditor General's report, the Department of Health received one of the worst audits of all the departments in the 2017/2018 financial year. Hence, Mkhize's argument that hospitals have little resources due to the country's overall financial woes and therefore cannot provide services properly, is weak," says Venter.

It is ironic that the Minister chose to hold the media conference at the Mamelodi Hospital, where Martha Marais's (76) hands were tied behind her back and she was left on the floor for eight hours.

"AfriForum is currently in the process of compiling a report on the defects of the health sector. The stories we receive from the public are frightening and the implementation of the NHI will only lead to further and even worse horror stories. This is because the NHI will deprive everyone of their right to decide which service provider they want to use, which will mean that private hospitals and clinics will no longer have to compete for patients," says Dr Eugene Brink, AfriForum's Strategic Advisor for Community Affairs.

Issued by Hesti Steenkamp, Media Relations Officer, AfriForum, 7 June 2019