

## **Public health needs private sector help, not NHI (letter)**

**Business Day 4 February 2020**

A workable system could be copied from the Urban Foundation

A while ago at the Remgro annual general meeting, Johann Rupert predicted that the national health insurance (NHI) scheme would place existing private hospitals at risk, and that it would cause an exodus of qualified medical practitioners from SA.

May I suggest that it would be propitious if everyone involved in the provision of medical services in the private sector were to join hands to assist the government, not in its efforts to introduce NHI (which is doomed to fail), but to improve the availability and quality of medical services at state hospitals, training hospitals, nurses' colleges and clinics.

SA has a wealth of successful medical-aid societies, individuals and companies involved in that field that could contribute meaningfully towards the establishment and conduct of a scheme under the auspices and guidance of the private sector.

Civil society solving apparently intractable problems is not without precedent. Harry Oppenheimer, Gavin Reddy, Rupert's father, Anton Rupert, and others successfully coalesced in forming the Urban Foundation under the leadership of the late judge Jan Steyn.

**Louis van Zyl**

*Via e-mail*