

NHI is needed now more than ever - IOL 9 August 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about death and suffering never seen before in our country, claiming the lives of both rich and poor.

Public and private hospitals are pushed to the brink.

Covid-19 has highlighted the need for a health-care system that supports all South African citizens, regardless of their financial standing. More than ever, access to health care shouldn't depend on how much you can pay.

The roll-out of National Health Insurance (NHI) is now long overdue and would address systemic inequality in health care.

Before Covid-19, private hospitals and medical aid schemes were the preserve of the wealthy. It is this system of privilege that the NHI will disrupt for the benefit of all South Africans.

The fundamental aim of the NHI is to reform the health-care system and promote equal access to health care, as guaranteed under our Constitution.

NHI is needed now more than ever as we stare down the peak of Covid-19 infections and the death toll rises daily.

Poverty should not be a death sentence. The health-care system should cater to those who need it most, not just to those who can afford it.

President Cyril Ramaphosa had spoken of laying the foundation for the NHI, so "all people have access to the quality health care they need, regardless of their ability to pay".

This is now our task: reforming a broken system to benefit South Africans of all walks of life in the wake of the horror that is Covid-19.

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*** The views expressed here are not necessarily those of Independent Media.*