

ANC, DA still at odds over National Health Insurance – News24 - 5 July 2019

While Health Minister Zweli Mkhize is adamant that the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill will become a reality, the DA has vowed that it will not be passed "uncontested".

The Portfolio Committee on Health was briefed by the Department of Health on its annual performance plan and budget for the 2019/20 financial year on Thursday.

According to a statement by committee chairperson Sibongiseni Dhlomo, the committee said South Africa was known as one of the most unequal countries in the world and that the health sector contributed to this perception.

"The committee indicated that the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, has the silver bullet to change all that, by ensuring that rich and poor have equal access to healthcare," the statement reads.

Mkhize then assured the committee that the NHI Bill was on its way to becoming a reality.

DA MP and spokesperson on health Siviwe Gwarube does not view the NHI as a "silver bullet".

In a statement released after the meeting, she pointed out that a report on the feasibility of the NHI pilot projects had never been made public.

According to Gwarube, Mkhize did not care about the outcomes of the report or the cost of the project.

"This attitude by Minister Mkhize indicates that the ANC government is prepared to proceed with the disastrous NHI, despite the impact it will have on the economy and on the health system as a whole," she said.

"The road to universal healthcare is not limited to this problematic piece of legislation. More concerningly is the establishment of yet another state-owned-enterprise which will open up the public purse to looting by the politically-connected few."

She said the ANC government seemed determined to nationalise healthcare, "which will be the final nail in the coffin of an ailing health system".

She said the DA had long held the view that universal healthcare was possible, but that the NHI, as proposed by the ANC government, was too expensive and not feasible.

"The ANC forcing through the NHI will not go uncontested, the DA will fight this and propose a credible plan that will ensure that every South African has access to proper and quality public healthcare," Gwarube said.