

Attack on NHI by private healthcare providers condemned – NEHAWU

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NEHAWU condemns attack on the NHI by private healthcare providers

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] condemns the attacks by a pressure group of health practitioners and academics directed at the imminent implementation of the National Health Insurance [NHI] by the Minister of Health. Although it is to be expected that private healthcare providers would attack the NHI, the national union will never allow such attacks to go on unchallenged.

The attack on the Minister is not only an attack directed at him but to millions of South African's who stand to benefit from the NHI. It takes such ingrained elitist arrogance to seek to subvert and undermine the overwhelming two successive electoral support given by the people of this country to the NHI. It is worth noting that those who are attacking the implementation including the Democratic Alliance [DA] are those who are hell-bent on maintaining Apartheid inequalities and discrimination through the market forces, who seek to protect their extortionate profits that they extract from sick people.

As NEHAWU, we believe that those attacking the NHI do not support the ideals of universal healthcare coverage which seeks to ensure that comprehensive access to healthcare is availed to all regardless of their ability to pay.

The national union shall not stand idle while its brain child is rubbished by greedy private healthcare providers in defence of their profits. As NEHAWU, we hold a strong view that the NHI must be implemented as soon as possible without any further delay. Majority of South Africans will benefit greatly from the NHI and that is why we believe that society at large should be united in defending its implementation. In this regard, the national union will be undertaking a campaign to teach ordinary South African's about the NHI. NEHAWU will criss-cross the country and visit universities, workplaces, community halls etc. in a quest to educate the masses about the benefits of the NHI.

The DA has never at any point cared for the working class and poor but has always been on the side of the private sector. Their allegiance to those who have embarked in the quest to commodify and privatise the healthcare system is there for all to see, thereby denying the working class their essential and constitutional right to universal healthcare.

As NEHAWU, a union organising in the healthcare sector, we are better placed to comment on the state of the sector in the country. Our members are at the coalface of dealing with the challenges currently engulfing the sector. Therefore, we refuse to be dictated to by people who have just visited a few hospitals just once. Furthermore, we vehemently reject the use of these challenges to cheap political point scoring and electioneering.

NEHAWU calls on the Minister to ignore those who are hell-bent on derailing the implementation of the NHI. Our view is that the implementation has been delayed for far too long and that unnecessary delays must be avoided at all costs. Our long held view is that the NHI will be better placed to deal with the challenges facing the public healthcare sector currently. We want to further warn anyone who still harbour ambitions of further delaying the NHI that they will be faced with the full might of the union.

Issued by Khaya Xaba, Media Liaison, NEHAWU, 19 June 2018