

NHI pilot project fails at Elim District Hospital – DA Limpopo

NHI pilot project fails at Elim District Hospital as cash and staff shortages continue

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Today, the DA conducted an oversight inspection at the Elim District Hospital in Limpopo. The health facility was administered under the failed National Health Insurance (NHI) pilot project in the Vhembe District.

The challenges at the Elim District Hospital are proof that the NHI will not address the serious issues at the root of the collapsing public health sector. Simply put, the NHI is not a feasible plan to fix the public health care system. If the pilot projects are failing, how can the ANC government expect it to succeed on a national level?

In the 2016/17 financial year, the Vhembe District scored a lowly 42% in the Office of Health Standards Compliance's (OHSC) Annual Inspection Report and the DA's findings at the hospital were indicative of why the district performed so poorly.

The DA spoke to the hospital's CEO, Pfuluwani Matodzi, who stated that the 108-year-old hospital is currently faced with challenges such as staff shortages, despite the fact that 95% of the hospital's budget is allocated towards personnel costs. Other challenges raised by the CEO include infrastructure issues and continuous water shortages.

Due to the facility's budgetary constraints, the hospital is unable to pay for goods and services, lab costs, blood services and infrastructure repairs.

A visit to the maternity ward highlighted the plight of the hospital. It was seriously overcrowded, linen was old and many of the baby bassinets were in disgraceful condition. Most disturbing was the fact that at the time of the visit there were no Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccines for newborns.

Just down the road at the Waterval Clinic, there were no diabetic medicines, which is one of the biggest killers of people in Limpopo. There was also no antibiotics, cough syrups or medicines to treat minor ailments.

The DA is the only party that has a tried and tested alternative to the NHI. The DA's Our Health Plan is the most credible and workable offer, as it will ensure that no South African is denied quality health care because they are poor.

In the DA-governed, Western Cape, patients have access to the best public health system in the country and we will continue to fight to ensure that all South Africans have access to dignified health services.