

## **An alternative to NHI: unpacking the Sizani Universal Healthcare plan** – The South African 22 August 2019

The Democratic Alliance has proposed a concentrated Sizani Universal Healthcare Plan, that aims to give South Africans free healthcare, at public and private health institutions throughout the country.

This healthcare plan comes in attempts of replacing the heavily criticised National Health Insurance bill which is planned to be passed into law by the government.

What does this healthcare plan mean for average South Africans?

I interviewed Siviwe Gwarube, the DA National Spokesperson on Health and asked for a breakdown of the healthcare plan, and what it means for the average South African.

More than 84% of South African's rely on the public health system, and the current healthcare system has proven to be unsustainable which allows room for it to be reformed. According to Gwarube, the DA's Sizani Universal Healthcare Plan aims to rectify pre-existing inequalities which exist in the [current health system](#).

*“Sizani would afford all eligible citizens a basic package of care, that would give them access to free health services at the point of entry across any health facility in the country. There would be little difference in the quality of health services provided across these facilities. The DA would ensure that the priority is to improve the current health facilities by investing in infrastructure, more doctors and nurses and emergency services. It would also afford people the choice to remain on their medical aid schemes, should they choose to and be able to afford it.”*

Sizani Universal Healthcare: How much will it cost taxpayers?

Gwarube also mentions that the rising cost of private medical care, will be regulated between the private and public healthcare systems. Through the Sizani Universal Healthcare Plan, I further asked what it would cost taxpayers for the implementation of this bill.

*“Sizani aims to roll out universal healthcare within the current budget envelope, which sits at R222 billion. We would supplement this with the tax benefit afforded to medical aid clients, should they choose to use the public health system which would be of the same quality. The*

*idea is to not to add any additional financial burden, on South Africans who are already struggling.”*

*DA National Spokesperson on Health, Siviwe Gwarube*

Siviwe Gwarube: “no additional tax burden”

Gwarube also states that people without medical aid will still have the opportunity for primary healthcare services, in both public and private health facilities.

*“The only outcome under Sizani for members of the public would be an improved health system that is of quality, and the access of all health facilities -private or public- for primary healthcare and no additional tax burden.”*

*DA National Spokesperson on Health, Siviwe Gwarube*