

Forget NHI, use the money for new clinics: DA MP

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The R1 billion set aside for the first rollout of NHI would be better spent on building new clinics and a shakeup of existing health facilities, says DA MP Wilmot James

The R1 billion set aside for the first rollout of NHI would be better spent on building new clinics and a shakeup of existing health facilities, DA MP Wilmot James said in Parliament on Wednesday.

South Africa needed universal health care, but not through the "elaborate, overcomplicated, convoluted and monumentally costly" National Health Insurance, he said in reply to President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address.

The money would be better spent shaking up the existing health system, starting with a war room to track ambulance response times because people said they did not arrive.

At last count, there were 2690 public and private ambulances in the country, but only half were in order, he said.

People had complained to the SA Human Rights Commission that when ambulances did come, hospital staff were rude.

He suggested a national fund to underwrite the critical health needs of people, whether on medical aid or not, and the appointment of clinically qualified chief executive officers to run hospitals.

He called for a probe into the medical waste removal and disposal sector. There had been complaints that at some hospitals, like Rahima Moosa in Johannesburg, medical waste was piling up because the contracted company was not doing its job.

This company had surprisingly been awarded the contract to remove medical waste at hospitals in Free State.

James said he had laid charges against Eastern Cape Health MEC Phumza Dyantyi for allegedly violating health regulations in this regard.

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