



15 May 2024

To all media houses

RAMAPHOSA'S NHI BILL WILL PLUNGE SA INTO MEDICAL CHAOS

For immediate release

While the Congress of the People supports the principle of universal access to quality health care to address some of society's inequality, we vehemently reject the opportunistic and partisan way that the National Health Insurance Bill is being forced through for narrow electioneering purposes.

The current National Health Insurance Bill, which President Ramaphosa is unwisely determined to sign into law today is flawed in many aspects.

For starters, it did not follow a proper, inclusive, rational legislative process and may not pass constitutional muster. The funding model and source of funding is unclear.

It is a sensible practice to consider the cost implications of any Bill in the legislative process. Many proposals submitted by other stakeholders, including COPE, have been brushed aside.

COPE believes that the process to achieve quality universal healthcare should not be irrationally rushed but should follow a thorough strengthening of the current health care system, which is notorious for many institutional failures.

This is a classic example of political arrogance and the imposition of the tyranny of the majority, which is characteristic of the ruling party and has been counterproductive for unity of purpose.

Just the other day, the ANC's former President, Thabo Mbeki, called for a national dialogue and emphasised that no one party has solutions to the plethora of challenges faced by the nation.

Should President Ramaphosa go ahead with the signing without the consideration of the views and inputs of stakeholders, it would be a clear message to repudiate Mbeki's call. It would reaffirm his prior declaration that party interests will take precedence over those of the country.

COPE calls on President Ramaphosa to do the right thing, for once, and not to sign the Bill in its current form but to send it back to Parliament for proper consideration, inclusivity and unity of the nation.

Ends.

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