

## The South African health sector and the World Health organization South Africa's health sector and its preparedness for the National Health Insurance (NHI): Challenges and opportunities

**Nduduzo C. Ndebele**

*University of Zululand, Public Administration Department*  
[Ndebelen@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:Ndebelen@unizulu.ac.za)

**Victor H. Mlambo**

*University of Zululand, Public Administration Department*  
[halavico@yahoo.com](mailto:halavico@yahoo.com)

**John N. Molepo**

*University of Mpumalanga, Public Administration and Management Department*  
[John.Molepo@ump.ac.za](mailto:John.Molepo@ump.ac.za)

**Sibiya LM**

[sibiyaLM@unizulu.ac.za](mailto:sibiyaLM@unizulu.ac.za)  
*University of Zululand, Public Administration Department*

### Abstract

The South African health system was and still characterized by social exclusion underpinned by those who can and those who cannot afford. Reflecting on the health sector during the apartheid era, prioritization was to ensure that the minority had access to the best healthcare services available while the majority lingered in poverty unable to access quality basic healthcare services. To gain a deeper understanding of South Africa's health sector, it challenges and the imminent implementation of the NHI, this paper seeks to systematize the existing empirical literature on the South Africa's health sector. By systematically addressing existing empirical research, the paper provides a sound basis for a more evidence-based discussion of this highly debated and politicized issue. The study results highlighted corruption, lack of infrastructure and shortage of well-trained healthcare workers as chronic challenges facing South Africa's healthcare sector. Therefore, the study concludes that although NHI's quest to address injustices of the past and ensuring citizens access healthcare without being subjected to affordability criteria can be characterized as noble, we argue however that, its implementation need to factor in the current challenges in the health sector as without addressing these challenges, the NHI is bound to encounter serious operational issues.

**Keywords:** Healthcare, Services, NHI, Access, Inequality, System.

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