



Triangle Project Clinic

# LGBTQI+ People, SOGIESC Human Rights and the National Health Insurance



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WE NEED UNIVERSAL, INCLUSIVE  
HEALTHCARE, NOW!

# LGBTQI+ Health Today

The majority of the population that uses the public health system receives inadequate healthcare. Our public hospitals are overcrowded, doctors, nurses and community health workers are overworked and medicines are often out of stock.

For LGBTQI+ people, it is even worse. We face stigma because of our sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex characteristics (SOGIESC), discrimination from health workers with conservative attitudes, and the health workers supposed to care for us often know little about LGBTQI+ health concerns.

From a survey of 131 LGBTQI+ community members:

**66.5%** FELT DEPRESSED AT LEAST ONE DAY IN THE PAST WEEK

**82%** HAVE EXPERIENCED INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

**49.5%** CONSUMED 5-6 ALCOHOLIC DRINKS ON A TYPICAL DAY

**46%** AVOIDED PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICS DUE TO DISCRIMINATION

If you are black, poor, unhoused, don't speak English, live in a rural area or have a disability, you will likely face even more barriers. The same is true for LGBTQI+ people who do sex work, use drugs or are refugees. All of these barriers must be addressed in order for LGBTQI+ people to have our health rights realised!



# What Does the NHI Mean for LGBTQI+ People?

The NHI Bill does not mention LGBTQI+ people at all, which is very worrying. Even though LGBTQI+ people have specific health needs, we are not listed as vulnerable populations. The NHI only covers 'medical necessities', and it is not clear whether LGBTQI+ health needs will be included in this category.

The NHI must work for all LGBTQI+ people in South Africa, regardless of race, class, geographical location, occupation or asylum status. We stand in solidarity with all who are excluded from access to health because of a fundamentally unequal system. We demand equitable healthcare that prioritises people who are most vulnerable, marginalised and in need of primary healthcare.

Some of the key issues LGBTQI+ people have with the NHI are:

- It does not include awareness of our human rights to sexual diversity, gender diversity and bodily diversity.
- There is very little discussion of HIV/AIDS, and funding for HIV/AIDS interventions may be removed.
- There is no mention of sensitivity training for staff, despite issues of homophobia, transphobia and intersexphobia in health services being common.
- To register for the NHI, people need documentation which causes difficulties for people whose gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics are different from their documents.
- The NHI will continue regional differences in health care standards with more funding and clinics in cities than townships and rural areas.
- Asylum seekers only have access to some emergency care services.
- The NHI does not adequately address things like stigma and discrimination faced by drug users and sex workers in the health care system.
- The NHI does not protect intersex people against intersex genital mutilation.

# What is the NHI?

The National Health Insurance, or the NHI, is a government policy that proposes to fundamentally change South Africa's health system. The NHI aims to fix the difference between public and private healthcare, and provide free healthcare to all South Africans and refugees. The NHI is a payment system that will buy health services and medicines. It will be funded by taxes - the more you earn, the more you pay.

The government has promised that everyone will have equal access to healthcare regardless of how much money they make. But, medical schemes are pushing the government towards separate health benefits that depend on your income and employment - this goes against principles of equity. As part of the NHI, changes are already being made in some public hospitals to improve them. We support the principles of the NHI: equity and social solidarity. But what does the NHI mean for LGBTQI+ people?

# Universal and Inclusive Healthcare for LGBTQI+ People

Universal health coverage means that everyone should have access to the healthcare they need without it costing too much money. The South African government says that it wants universal health coverage for all South Africans and that it will achieve this through the National Health Insurance (NHI).

Universal and inclusive health means healthcare for everyone, regardless of your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. It means a public system that is free at the point of use, focused on primary care facilities. It means health facilities that you can access, that are well stocked and that have doctors, nurses and staff with affirming attitudes and knowledge of your needs.

**THE NHI IS A REALLY IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY... BECAUSE WE ARE KIND OF REINVENTING THE WHEEL AT THE MOMENT AND THE PROBLEM WITH THE ORIGINAL WHEEL IS THAT IT DID NOT CONTEMPLATE THE EXISTENCE OF ALL THE UNIQUE SOGIESC NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS**



Carol, a Triangle Project nurse

**UNIVERSAL HEALTH WOULD MEAN A PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM, WHICH IS CAPABLE TO CATER TO EVERY PERSON, WITH THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS, WITHOUT REGARD FOR COSTS, THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSES ON PRIMARY HEALTHCARE**



Safer sex materials and information distributed by Triangle Project

# Key Demands from LGBTQI+ People



SAFER SEX MATERIALS  
SUCH AS DENTAL  
**DAMS AND**  
INTERNAL CONDOMS



**ACCESS  
TO PREP**



**ARTIFICIAL  
INSEMINATION**  
FOR LGBTQI+ PEOPLE



SHORTER WAITING  
TIMES FOR GENDER  
**AFFIRMING**  
HEALTHCARE



GENDER AFFIRMING  
**HORMONES**  
**AT YOUR**  
LOCAL CLINIC



**DECRIMINALISE  
SEX WORK**  
AND DRUG USE



HEALTH PROFESSIONALS  
WHO ARE INFORMED ABOUT  
**LGBTQI+ NEEDS**



**FORMS THAT ARE  
INCLUSIVE OF YOUR  
NAME AND PRONOUNS**



**INCLUSION OF  
REFUGEES, ASYLUM  
SEEKERS AND  
MIGRANTS**



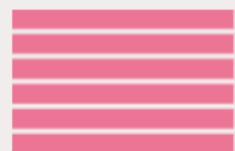
ACCESS TO MEDICAL  
**RECORDS AND  
REDRESS FOR**  
INTERSEX PEOPLE



**ACCESS TO  
HEALTHY FOOD  
AND SAFE  
HOUSING**



**PSYCHOSOCIAL  
SUPPORT**



LGBTQI+ PEOPLE  
RECOGNISED AS  
**VULNERABLE  
POPULATIONS**



**OPIOID**  
SUBSTITUTION  
TREATMENT



BAN NON-CONSENSUAL  
**SURGERIES**  
ON INTERSEX PEOPLE



**LGBTQI+**  
REPRESENTATION  
ON NHI COMMITTEES



**AWARENESS  
OF SOGIESC  
HUMAN RIGHTS**