



Health for All Now!

**People's Health Movement**  
South Africa

Press Statement  
For Immediate Release  
Thursday, 7 June 2018

## **PHM-SA Demands Health Equity for All Now!**

The People's Health Movement South Africa (PHM-SA) calls on civil society, communities and allies in health struggles to join in mass mobilisation and community action to realise health equity and the right to health for all in South Africa. We call on all to demand people-centred health services based on the principles of human rights, universality, social solidarity and social justice.

We are currently commemorating forty years since the issuing of the groundbreaking [Alma Ata Declaration](#) of 1978. The Declaration asserted health as a fundamental human right, challenged gross inequalities in the health status of people, and asserted comprehensive Primary Health Care as the key for achieving Health for All. It called for "urgent action by all governments, all health and development workers, and the world community to protect and promote the health of all the people of the world". This right to the highest attainable standard of health is enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution.

Over the past decades, South Africa has had several opportunities to realise health equity and people's right to health through transforming the country's health services to provide equitable and comprehensive services to all consistent with the Primary Health Care approach. However, these initiatives have largely failed for various social and political reasons, leaving our public health system in a state of near-collapse and more oriented towards cure than prevention, while the country's social determinants of health (such as housing, water and sanitation, food, unemployment, education and pollution) also remain largely unaddressed, with deep social and economic inequalities fuelling a huge quadruple burden of disease.

The imperative now is for civil society to ensure that government and all stakeholders in the health sector take decisive action to ensure Health for All. An opportunity is currently presenting itself in the development and implementation of the [National Health Insurance \(NHI\)](#), which is the South African government's policy for promoting Universal Health Coverage and which reflects government's commitment to the Right to Health. The original vision of the government's NHI policy is based on the following principles:

1. The Constitutional right to affordable and acceptable quality health services.
2. The state's duty to ensure progressive realisation of the right to health care through Universal Health Coverage (a key target of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals).
3. Funding of health services in an equitable manner that promotes social solidarity through taxation, ensuring that those who are better off cross-subsidise health services for all, especially the poor.

To achieve this vision and ensure that health equity and healthcare access are realised for all, government and all stakeholders in the health sectors need to be held accountable by civil society, communities and our allies in health struggles. To this end, a **public meeting will be held on Saturday, 9 June, 9:00am-12:00pm, at the Ashley Kriel Hall, Community House, Salt River Road, Cape Town**. The aim of the meeting is to share information and critically discuss current obstacles to achieving health equity and access in South Africa, and to initiate a process of broader mobilisation for Health for All.



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Speakers from the People's Health Movement South Africa, Treatment Action Campaign and Rural Health Advocacy Project will address critical health equity issues, including South African health struggles 40 years after Alma Ata, mobilising healthcare workers as change agents and patient advocates, mobilising for a People's National Health Insurance, as well as mobilising towards the [Fourth People's Health Assembly](#) that will commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Alma Ata Declaration. PHM-SA will also be launching [Global Health Watch 5](#) and a new health advocacy and mobilisation platform, BAVUSE!, which uses mobile phones in grassroot mobilisation for community health struggles.

The public meeting will be followed by a press conference.

*Demanding Health Equity for All Now!*

**People's Health Movement South Africa (PHM-SA)**

<http://phm-sa.org/>

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