

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Citizens Group Launch Petition Calling On BVI Government To Revisit National Health Insurance

Health / **Published On September 03, 2015 11:25 PM /**

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TORTOLA -- The National Health Insurance Concerned Citizens and Residents Group as they are calling themselves have put forward a petition calling on the BVI Government to stop the NHI and go back to the drawing board.

The group has listed a number of concerns.

It said the National Health Insurance scheme is mandatory for all persons residing in the Virgin Islands, and, therefore, may result in 60% of the population losing the private insurance provided through their employers who more than likely would not pay for both.

A member of the group Nathalio Sowande Uhuru Wheatley who spoke with VI Consortium said the National Health Insurance scheme will restrict choice as it pertains to health care providers.

“The National Health Insurance scheme will more than likely result in the layoff of some employees working in the private health insurance industry, and it will place an additional burden on small businesses, which may find it difficult to pay contributions to the scheme”, he said.

Wheatley said the NHI will increase the cost of living and the government has not presented evidence to the public that the National Health Insurance scheme will be viable and sustainable.

He said considering these factors, we, the undersigned, call on the Premier to halt the implementation of the NHI in its current form and initiate negotiations with the private insurance industry, employers, employees, citizens and residents and relevant government entities to create an insurance package that can provide coverage for the 40% of Virgin Islanders uninsured, allowing those who are satisfied with their private insurance to keep it.

Asked why the group is coming forward now after the NHI has already been launched, Wheatley said “unfortunately the government has taken an approach to this that has not been democratic, they started doing some consultations sometime ago, the consultations were not going in their favor and they stopped it”.

Wheatley said he would be going around the British Overseas territory seeking signatures from people for this petition and he is also asking persons to visit the website www.change.org and search for NHI Concerned Citizens and Residents Group.

Feature Image: Government House, BVI.

Image Credit: Robert English.