

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Businessman Says Way BVI Government Implementing National Health Insurance 'Disrespectful'

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TORTOLA -- As the implementation date for the National Health Insurance, NHI draws near, persons continue to express their concerns about the scheme and call on the government to go back to the drawing board.

These calls continued on ZBVI's Radio Programme – Speak Out BVI Tuesday evening from businessman La Fonte Nibbs and politician Natalio Sowande Uhuru Wheatley.

Nibbs said the current state of Social Security by law, addresses people's medical issues. He says it would have been more appropriate to have the NHI as a special department of the Social Security that addresses medical issues more broadly especially

the working class.

Nibbs says as it stands now, the people of the BVI will be paying twice for the same thing. He says the stance the government has taken with the NHI is showing disrespect to the people of the British Virgin Islands.

“You telling us in a free land as a people that we cannot have what we invest in... we already invest in Social Security, and the whole thing is how it is being done and is leading to be disrespectful. Much more discourse could have come on this so we could have the respect we have for each other”, the businessman said.

Nibbs said he is also troubled about the way he said the Ministers spoke down to the public when they launched the NHI on September 1st. “you got to remember guys who you are, we elected you to serve us, not the other way around... we could have don’t go to the polls (some of us probably did) and vote for who we wanted, that’s to show how fragile your position is as a representative.

So to take the sort of upper hand behavior, as these are your children and you could tell them when and how they could go, that is a bad approach and it borders on being disrespectful to the people of the British Virgin Islands, especially on the wake after an election”, he said.

Meanwhile talkshow host Ulric Scatliffe during “A Look at the Community Programme” over the weekend, said NHI is a good thing but it much be administered properly.

The NHI comes into effect on January 1st and is mandatory and will be providing health care to the entire population.

As part of the scheme, employers and employees both pay 3.75 percent, and an employee pays for the unemployed spouse while the government pays for children and the elderly.

However some persons say it would be a burden on small business which are already struggling to make payments to Social Security.