



Health

By April 2003, free Primary Healthcare (PHC) services were provided at about 3 500 public health clinics nationwide to non-medical aid members.

PHC services include immunisation, communicable and endemic disease prevention, maternity care, screening of children, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses and child healthcare, health promotion, counselling, chronic diseases, diseases of older persons, rehabilitation, accident and emergency services, family planning, and oral health.

Where necessary, patients with complications are referred to higher levels of care, such as hospitals.

Health delivery system

The major emphasis in the development of health services at provincial level has been the shift from curative hospital-based healthcare to that provided in an integrated community-based manner.

Provincial-hospital patients pay for examinations and treatment in accordance with their income and number of

Health budget			
	2004/05 (to be appropriated)	2005/06	2006/07
MTEF allocations	R8 787 865 000	R9 626 237 000	R10 457 912 000
Statutory amounts	–	–	–

Source: *Estimates of National Expenditure, 2004*

dependants. Patients may have their treatment partly or entirely financed by the provincial government.

Clinics

A network of mobile clinics run by government forms the backbone of primary and preventive healthcare. Between 1994 and 2003, upgrading and building resulted in 701 additional clinics.

Hospitals

There were 357 provincial public hospitals in 2002.

Funding for the Hospital Revitalisation Programme in 2004 has risen from R717 million in 2003 by almost R200 million. This will include the construction of 18 entirely new facilities.

In 1999, there were 200 private hospitals with 23 076 beds. Private hospital fees are generally higher than those of provincial hospitals.

South Africa has 18 State mental-health institutions with 10 000 beds.

Emergency medical services

Emergency medical services, including ambulance services, are run by the provinces, but training is nationally standardised.

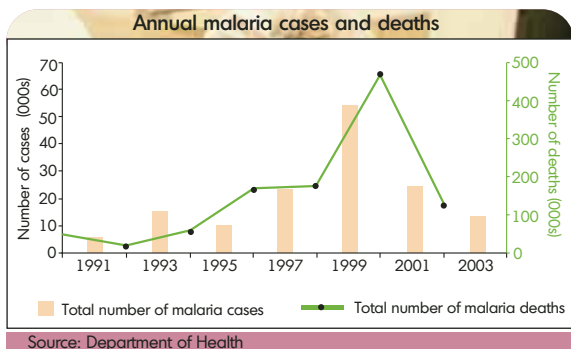
Private ambulance services also provide services to the community, mainly on a private basis. Some of these also provide aeromedical services.

Legislation

A National Health Bill presented to Parliament in July 2003 provides a legal framework for a national health system encompassing public and private service-providers.

It also sets out the rights and duties of healthcare providers, health workers, establishments and users.

The Traditional Healers Bill will provide for the



registration of traditional healers and the establishment of a statutory body for their regulation.

National School Health Policy

A policy and set of guidelines, launched in July 2003, aims to ensure that all children have equal access to school-health services. A comprehensive programme to train nurses is being rolled out. By 2007, the training programme will be implemented across the country.

Health team

The core team consists of:

- 30 578 registered doctors (end of 2003)
- 4 500 dentists (end of 2003)
- 10 782 pharmacists (end of 2001)
- 172 869 nurses and nursing auxiliaries (end of 2002).

South Africa has a severe shortage of health professionals such as physiotherapists, dietitians and radiographers.



By June 2003, some 2 662 young professional healthcare workers were doing community service, contributing to services offered by the public sector.

National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)

The NHLS consists of 234 laboratories. The NHLS provides cost-effective and efficient laboratory services to all public and private healthcare providers.

Medical schemes

The 168 private medical aids (April 1999) are regulated by the Council for Medical Schemes.

Community health

The most common communicable diseases in South Africa are tuberculosis (TB), malaria, measles and sexually transmitted infections.

Immunisations against TB, whooping cough, tetanus, diphtheria, polio myelitis, hepatitis B, hermafluos

Allied health professionals:

In July 2003, the following practitioners were registered:

• Ayurveda	114
• Chinese medicine and acupuncture	638
• chiropractors	424
• homeopaths	652
• naturopaths	142
• osteopaths	60
• phytotherapists	23
• therapeutic aromatherapists	1 003
• therapeutic massage therapists	279
• therapeutic reflexologists	1 726

Supplementary health professionals* include the following:

Basic ambulance assistants	21 548
Psychologists	5 607
Radiographers	5 033
Medical technologists	4 738
Ambulance emergency assistants	4 576
Occupational therapists	2 665
Environmental health officers	2 544
Optometrists	4 604
Physiotherapists	2 354

* December 2003



FACT

In 2002, the budget for the Primary School Nutrition Programme was increased from R592 million to R809 million. Five million children in 15 000 schools have benefited from the Programme.

influenza type-B and measles are available free of charge to all children up to the age of five.

In 2002, about 72% of children were fully immunised at the age of one, compared with 63% in 1998.

The last confirmed case of polio was reported in 1989.

Malaria is endemic in the low-altitude areas of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and north-eastern KwaZulu-Natal. The highest-risk area is a strip of about 100 km along the Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland borders.

Following a rise in malaria cases in 2000, drastic measures were taken which resulted in cases dropping by 74% in 2001, and a further 21% in 2002.

Tuberculosis

South Africa has 188 000 new TB cases a year. Free testing is available at public clinics countrywide.

Countrywide efforts have now been brought to bear on this disease. These efforts include:

- implementation of the Directly Observed Treatment Strategy
- the establishment of a national TB team
- a countrywide reporting system.

HIV/AIDS

In 2002/03, government provided large additional allocations for an enhanced response to HIV/AIDS and TB. Allocations of more than R1 billion for 2002/03 were again strengthened in the 2003 Budget.

Dedicated funding for HIV/AIDS is set to increase more than tenfold from R342 million in 2001/02 to R3,6 billion in 2005/06.

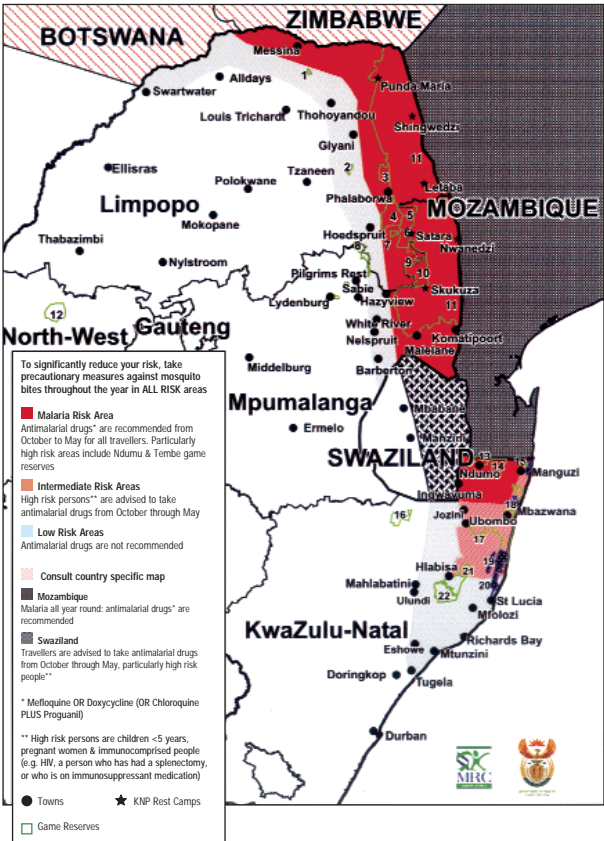


Photo: Guy Stubbs

On 19 November 2003, Cabinet approved in principle an Operational Plan for Comprehensive Treatment and Care of HIV and AIDS. Among others, the Plan provides for anti-retroviral treatment in the public health sector.

The programme includes service points in every district which will provide a continuum of care and treatment,

Malaria risk areas



Immunisations

1998	63%
2002	72%

Source: South Africa Yearbook 2003/04

integrated with a prevention and awareness campaign, which remains the cornerstone of the strategy to defeat HIV and AIDS.

Condoms are available free of charge at all clinics. During 2002, government distributed 350 million male condoms free of charge. This rose to 400 million in 2003/04. In 2003, 100 000 female condoms were distributed every month.

A programme that provides Nevirapine to mothers and babies is expanding. By 2003, at least 658 hospitals and clinics were providing a full package of care.

Government commits R20 million a year to the South African AIDS Vaccine Initiative.