



## HEALTH

The Department of Health aims to transform the public health system to reduce inequalities in the health system, improve quality of care and public facilities, boost human resources and step up the fight against HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and other communicable diseases as well as lifestyle and other causes of ill-health and mortality.

## **Primary healthcare (PHC), hospital services and emergency medical care**

The Health Technical Task Team for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, led by the Department of Health, is focusing on various areas such as emergency medical services (EMS), communicable diseases, environmental health, port health, stadiums, provision of primary healthcare and the establishment of command and control points.

In 2009, the Department of Health finalised and costed the Communicable Disease Control Strategic Plan for the Soccer World Cup in 2010.

During 2008/09, about 33 hospitals were under construction as part of the Hospital Revitalisation Project and 11 more hospitals were in the planning phase.

In 1994, government started providing free PHC services for children under six years old, and pregnant and lactating women.

During the same period, government initiated a programme that resulted in more than 1 600 clinics being built.

Access to PHC services, as measured by headcounts, reflects a consistent upward trend. Headcounts increased from 67 021 961 in 1998/99 to 101 748 188 in 2007/08.

PHC services include immunisation, communicable and endemic disease prevention, maternity care, screening of children, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) and child healthcare, health promotion, counselling, management of chronic diseases and 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.

Districts countrywide are integrating mental health and substance abuse into their PHC services.

Although provinces run their own EMS, including ambulance services, training is standardised nationally.

Private ambulance services also serve the community. Some of these also render aeromedical services.

The Department of Health has developed a national EMS plan for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. Some R8 million is being invested to upgrade emergency centres designated for the World Cup.

## Health status

### Child health

In 2008/09, the health sector implemented a combination of interventions to decrease infant and child mortality. Key among this was the Expanded Programme on Immunisation, which has over the last decade and a half made a significant contribution towards protecting South African children against vaccine-preventable diseases from conditions like measles, diphtheria and pertussis.

Immunisation coverage figures indicate a progressive increase in the number and percentage of children fully immunised, from 78% in 2002 to 82% in 2006/07, to 84% in 2007/08, and to 84,6% in December 2008. There were, however, districts that did not attain the expected 90% coverage in 2008/09, and targeted support was provided to them.

Two new vaccines will be introduced to help prevent deaths from pneumonia and diarrhoea, namely Prevenar and Rotatrix, respectively.

### Maternal and women's health

A cervical cancer screening coverage of 22% was attained by 2008, against a 2008/09 target of 40%.

Key priorities for strengthening maternal health include ensuring that 95% of pregnant women are tested for HIV by 2011/12, and that 95% of eligible pregnant women are placed on antiretroviral prophylaxis, using dual therapy, and that at least 50% of post-partum women are reviewed within three days.

### Communicable disease control

Key milestones were achieved in combating communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria. The public health sector continued to implement the Comprehensive Programme for HIV and AIDS Care, Management and Treatment.

The Department of Health distributes between 38 to 43 million condoms a month. In November 2009 alone, about 63 million condoms were distributed.

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The *Third National HIV Survey* that was conducted in 2008 found that the HIV prevalence rate has levelled off at 10,9% for people aged two years and older. Prevalence also declined among children aged two to 14, from 5,6% in 2002 to 2,5% in 2008.

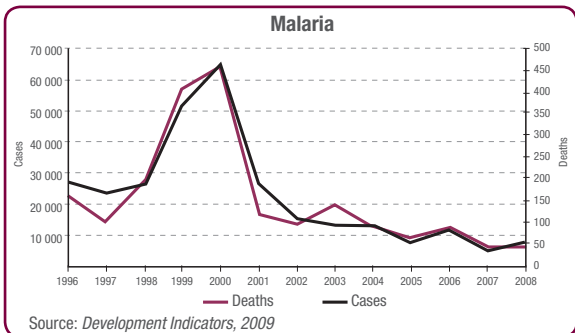
In October 2009, government announced an additional R5,4 billion for spending on its HIV and AIDS programmes. Taking into account further policy measures to broaden access to those co-infected with TB and women and children with CD4 counts lower than 350, a further R3 billion was allocated in the 2010 national Budget. By February 2010, about 920 000 people were on antiretroviral treatment. The Budget provides for the number to rise to 2,1 million in 2012/13.

Care and support are fortified through community-based services. About 27 000 community caregivers are expected to be receiving a stipend by March 2010.

One of the priorities of government is to increase the national TB cure rate from 60% in 2008 to 70% in 2010 by improving interventions for TB control and management. The TB cure rate of 60% in 2008 decreased from 63% in 2007.

TB-tracer teams are being appointed and placed in districts across South Africa to help reduce the defaulter rate, resulting in a decrease in the defaulter rate from 10% in 2005 to 7,9 in 2008.

A 48% increase in the number of malaria cases was observed in 2008, compared to 2007. In 2007, 5 210 malaria cases were



reported compared to 7 727 in 2008. About 44 malaria deaths were reported in 2008, compared to 48 in 2007, which reflects an 8% decrease.

South Africa continues to collaborate with neighbouring countries on malaria control.

In 2009, the H1N1 influenza pandemic hit South Africa. The pandemic started in Mexico and the United States of America in April 2009 and rapidly spread to 166 countries globally with a cumulative number of 174 913 laboratory confirmed cases and 1 411 confirmed deaths in August 2009.

By September 2009, the number of confirmed cases in South Africa had risen to 5 841, with 27 deaths reported.

## Policy National

The department has adopted a 10-point plan for the 2009 to 2012 period. The plan includes:

- providing strategic leadership and creation of a social compact for better health outcomes
- implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI) system
- accelerated implementation of the HIV and AIDS plan and increased focus on TB and other communicable diseases
- overhauling the healthcare system
- improved human-resource planning, development and management
- improving the quality of health services
- revitalising the health infrastructure
- mass mobilisation for better health for the population
- reviewing the drug policy
- strengthening research and development.

### Registered and enrolled nurses, 2008

Registered nurses and midwives	107 978
Enrolled nurses and midwives	43 685
Nursing auxiliaries	61 142

Source: South African Nursing Council

## **Health team**

By December 2008, the core team of practising medical practitioners in South Africa consisted of:

- 44 971 registered medical and dental practitioners
- 46 305 emergency care personnel
- 10 948 pharmacists (2007).

South Africa has a shortage of physiotherapists, dieticians and radiographers.

## **National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)**

The NHLS is the largest diagnostic pathology service in South Africa, with more than 250 laboratories serving 80% of the country's population. All laboratories provide laboratory diagnostic services to the national and provincial departments of health, provincial hospitals, local governments and medical practitioners.

The NHLS conducts health-related research appropriate to the needs of the broader population, and trains pathologists, medical scientists, occupational health practitioners, technologists and technicians in pathology disciplines.

## **Medical schemes**

In September 2009, there were 112 medical schemes. The total number of principal members of registered medical schemes increased by 6% from 3 178 127 at 31 December 2007 to 3 366 383 at September 2008.

The number of beneficiaries increased by 4,6% from 7 478 040 in 2007 to 7 823 137 in 2008.

## **National Health Insurance**

The Department of Health seeks to establish an NHI system, which will introduce the necessary funding and service-delivery mechanisms to enable the creation of an efficient, equitable and sustainable health system in South Africa.

In November 2009, the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, announced the appointment of a 25-member committee to advise him on an implementation plan for the NHI system.