

FreeFACTS

No 3/2018 / July 2018 / Issue 3

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South Africa's state of health

Against the background of the proposed National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme and amid growing concern at its implications, this report provides an overview of major healthcare trends in South Africa.

Public health spending accounts for 12.1% of total government expenditure, up from 10.5% in 1994/95. It also accounts for 4% of GDP, up from 3.1% in 1994/95. Data on private medical cover — an indicator of middle class status — shows that less than a fifth of South Africa's population are beneficiaries of private schemes.

Only 38.3% of public clinics in Gauteng are classified by health authorities as having good infrastructure, adequate staff and medicine as well as good administrative processes. In Limpopo, however, there are only 8.3% of such clinics. South Africa has more private than public hospitals — Gauteng has about four times as many private as public hospitals. A similar trend is seen in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

In terms of human resources, the number of general practitioners nearly doubled between 2000 and 2016. Nurses and pharmacists have also increased in number over the years.

Life expectancy, a fundamental health gauge, improved from 54.9 years in 2002 to 64 years in 2017. During the same period, the fertility rate decreased from 2.50 to 2.41 — people are having fewer children for varying reasons. In addition, infant and under-five mortality rates decreased by 31.8% and 40.5% respectively. About 18% of people aged 15 to 49 are HIV-positive.

The Minister of Health, Aaron Motsoaledi, recently cited human resources, financial management, procurement and management of infrastructure, and maintenance of equipment as key areas of concern in healthcare delivery. A major revamp of management efficiency is necessary to bring public healthcare to optimum efficiency. It is unclear that the NHI proposal is geared to achieve that. — **Marius Roodt**

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Health

The cost factor

Expenditure

Consolidated government health expenditure, 1994/95-2020/21			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Rbn</i>	<i>Proportion of total expenditure</i>	<i>Proportion of GDP</i>
1994/95	15.6	10.5%	3.1%
2000/01	28.1	14.3%	3.0%
2001/02	30.8	13.7%	2.9%
2002/03	35.2	10.8%	2.9%
2003/04	38.8	10.4%	3.0%
2004/05	44.5	10.5%	3.1%
2005/06	50.0	10.5%	3.1%
2006/07	59.0	11.4%	3.2%
2007/08	62.7	10.6%	3.0%
2008/09	77.4	10.9%	3.2%
2009/10	93.6	11.4%	3.7%
2010/11	102.7	11.7%	3.6%
2011/12	115.2	12.1%	3.7%
2012/13	124.5	11.9%	3.7%
2013/14	133.8	11.7%	3.7%
2014/15	144.2	11.7%	3.7%
2015/16	159.2	12.0%	3.9%
2016/17 ^a	172.3	12.1%	3.9%
2017/18 ^a	187.8	12.1%	4.0%
2018/19 ^a	201.0	12.1%	4.0%
2019/20 ^a	217.3	12.2%	4.0%
2020/21 ^a	235.2	12.2%	4.1%

Source: National Treasury, *Budget Review* data

a Estimates.

Medical insurance

Registered medical schemes, 2005-17		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Open schemes^a</i>	<i>Restricted schemes^b</i>
2005	47	84
2006	41	83
2007	41	81
2008	37	82
2009	33	77
2010	27	73
2011	26	71
2012	25	68
2013	24	63
2014	23	60
2015	22	60
2016	22	60
2017 ^c	22	60

Source: Council for Medical Schemes (CMS)

a Can be joined by any person.

b For specific employer groups.

c As at March 2017.

Beneficiaries of medical aid schemes, 1997-2016		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries</i>	<i>Proportion of total population^a</i>
1997	6 965 000	17.0%
1998	6 992 000	16.6%
1999	6 989 000	16.2%
2000	6 729 551	15.4%
2001	6 764 409	15.2%
2002	6 713 870	14.8%
2003	6 671 801	14.4%
2004	6 662 563	14.3%
2005	6 835 621	14.6%
2006	7 127 343	15.0%
2007	7 478 040	15.6%
2008	7 874 826	16.2%
2009	8 068 505	16.4%
2010	8 315 718	16.6%
2011	8 526 409	16.9%
2012	8 679 473	16.6%
2013	8 778 308	16.6%
2014	8 814 458	16.3%
2015	8 809 523	16.2%
2016	8 878 081	15.9%

Source: CMS; Statistics South Africa (Stats SA)

a IRR calculations.

Infrastructure and facilities

Clinics and hospitals

Public clinics by province, 2016/17					
Province	Public clinics	Proportion of total ^a	People per public clinic ^a	Ideal ^b public clinics	Proportion of public clinics ^c
Eastern Cape	766	23.0%	8 484 to 1	127	16.6%
Free State	240	7.2%	11 945 to 1	58	24.2%
Gauteng	342	10.3%	41 751 to 1	131	38.3%
KwaZulu-Natal	634	19.1%	17 468 to 1	193	30.4%
Limpopo	458	13.8%	12 617 to 1	38	8.3%
Mpumalanga	261	7.8%	17 028 to 1	48	18.4%
North West	276	8.3%	13 972 to 1	86	31.2%
Northern Cape	136	4.1%	8 926 to 1	64	47.1%
Western Cape	214	6.4%	30 422 to 1	41	19.2%
South Africa	3 327	100.0%	16 989 to 1	786	23.6%

Source: Department of Health (DoH); Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2017*

a IRR calculations.

b A clinic with good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medicine and supplies, good administrative processes, and sufficient adequate bulk supplies.

c For example, 16.6% of all public clinics in the Eastern Cape are ideal clinics.

Public and private hospitals by province, 2016/17						
Province	Public ^a	Private ^b	Total	Public as a proportion of total ^c	Private as a proportion of total ^c	People per hospital (total) ^c
Eastern Cape	74	63	137	54.0%	46.0%	47 436 to 1
Free State	31	32	63	49.2%	50.8%	45 503 to 1
Gauteng	28	113	141	19.9%	80.1%	101 267 to 1
KwaZulu-Natal	55	90	145	37.9%	62.1%	76 378 to 1
Limpopo	39	29	68	57.4%	42.6%	84 976 to 1
Mpumalanga	28	24	52	53.8%	46.2%	85 465 to 1
North West	18	17	35	51.4%	48.6%	110 177 to 1
Northern Cape	13	7	20	65.0%	35.0%	60 700 to 1
Western Cape	43	51	94	45.7%	54.3%	69 259 to 1
South Africa	329	426	755	43.6%	56.4%	74 863 to 1

Source: HST; Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2017*

a Excludes Community Health Centres.

b Includes specialised, psychiatric and specialised TB hospitals.

c IRR calculations.

Laboratories

Medical laboratories by province, 2018		
<i>Province</i>	<i>Accredited^{a,b} medical laboratories</i>	<i>Proportion of total accredited^c</i>
Eastern Cape	32	8.3%
Free State	25	6.5%
Gauteng	159	41.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	63	16.3%
Limpopo	11	2.8%
Mpumalanga	17	4.4%
North West	15	3.9%
Northern Cape	4	1.0%
Western Cape	61	15.8%
South Africa	387	100.0%

Source: South African National Accreditation System (SANAS)

a Figures as at 29 June 2018.

b Laboratories accredited by the South African National Accreditation System.

c IRR calculations.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies ^a in hospitals by province, 2018						
<i>Province</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Total^b</i>	<i>Public as a proportion of total^b</i>	<i>Private as a proportion of total^b</i>	<i>People per pharmacy (total)^b</i>
Eastern Cape	107	21	128	83.6%	16.4%	50 771 to 1
Free State	53	15	68	77.9%	22.1%	42 157 to 1
Gauteng	97	102	199	48.7%	51.3%	71 752 to 1
KwaZulu-Natal	99	45	144	68.8%	31.3%	76 908 to 1
Limpopo	52	11	63	82.5%	17.5%	40 128 to 1
Mpumalanga	35	13	48	72.9%	27.1%	92 588 to 1
North West	50	16	66	75.8%	24.2%	58 427 to 1
Northern Cape	42	6	48	87.5%	12.5%	25 292 to 1
Western Cape	141	46	187	75.4%	24.6%	34 814 to 1
South Africa	676	275	951	71.1%	28.9%	59 434 to 1

Source: Medpages; Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2017*

a As at 12 June 2018.

b IRR calculations.

Medical personnel Doctors

Public sector general practitioners and specialists, 2000-16			
Year ^a	General practitioners	Specialists	Total
2000	7 591	3 881	11 472
2001	7 352	3 812	11 164
2002	7 287	3 685	10 972
2003	7 645	3 446	11 091
2005	8 747	3 499	12 246
2006	9 527	3 695	13 222
2007	9 959	4 000	13 959
2008	10 653	4 026	14 679
2009	10 878	4 311	15 189
2010	11 309	4 442	15 751
2011	12 014	4 620	16 634
2012	12 444	4 775	17 219
2013	13 531	4 947	18 478
2014	13 593	4 893	18 486
2015	13 656	4 986	18 642
2016	14 036	4 737	18 773

Source: HST; HPCSA

a Data for 2004 was not available.

Nurses

Registered ^a professional and enrolled nurses, 1998-2017					
Year	Professional nurses ^b	Enrolled nurses ^c	Year	Professional nurses ^b	Enrolled nurses ^c
1998	91 011	32 744	2009	111 299	48 078
1999	92 390	32 925	2010	115 244	52 370
2000	93 303	32 399	2011	118 262	55 408
2001	94 552	32 120	2012	124 045	58 722
2002	94 948	32 495	2013	129 015	63 788
2003	96 715	33 575	2014	133 127	66 891
2004	98 490	35 266	2015	136 854	70 300
2005	99 534	37 085	2016	140 598	73 558
2006	101 295	39 305	2017	142 092	74 556
2007	103 792	40 582			
2008	107 978	43 686			
			1998-2017	56.1%	127.7%

Source: SANC

a Registered with the South African Nursing Council.

b Includes nurses practising in either the public or the private sector, those working abroad, and those registered but no longer practising. Professional nurses have completed a four-year programme at university or a nursing college and practise comprehensive nursing and midwifery.

c Includes nurses practising in either the public or the private sector, those working abroad, and those registered but no longer practising. Enrolled nurses have completed a two-year programme at a public or private institution, usually a nursing college. Alternatively, an enrolled nurse has left university after completing only two years of the four-year university programme. Enrolled nurses practise basic nursing.

Pharmacists

All registered pharmacists ^a , 2003-18		
Year	Number	People per registered pharmacist ^b
2003	10 629	4 368 to 1
2004	10 891	4 278 to 1
2005	10 824	4 332 to 1
2007	11 547	4 144 to 1
2008	11 905	4 090 to 1
2010	12 218	4 092 to 1
2011	12 460	4 060 to 1
2012	13 003	4 025 to 1
2014	13 364	4 041 to 1
2015	13 479	4 077 to 1
2017	14 412	3 922 to 1
2018	15 173	3 725 to 1
2003-18	42.8%	—

Source: South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC); HST; Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates*

a Registered with the South African Pharmacy Council. Includes those practising in either the public or the private sector, those working abroad, and those registered but no longer practising.

b IRR calculations.

Selected indicators

Life expectancy at birth by sex, 2002-17			
Year	Male	Female	Total
2002	52.9	56.6	54.9
2003	52.5	55.8	54.2
2004	52.2	55.3	53.8
2005	52.1	54.8	53.5
2006	52.3	54.7	53.5
2007	53.3	56.1	54.7
2008	54.3	57.9	56.1
2009	55.0	58.7	56.9
2010	56.4	60.6	58.5
2011	57.6	62.7	60.2
2012	58.5	63.6	61.1
2013	59.2	64.6	61.9
2014	59.7	65.1	62.5
2015	60.0	65.5	62.8
2016	60.6	66.1	63.4
2017	61.2	66.7	64.0
2002-17	15.7%	17.8%	16.6%

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2017*

Health

Fertility, birth and death rates^a, 2002-17

<i>Year</i>	<i>Fertility rate^a</i>	<i>Birth rate^b</i>	<i>Death rate^c</i>
2002	2.50	21.7	13.4
2003	2.46	21.7	14.0
2004	2.56	22.7	14.4
2005	2.62	23.4	14.8
2006	2.68	24.1	14.8
2007	2.73	24.8	14.0
2008	2.72	24.8	13.0
2009	2.66	24.4	12.6
2010	2.61	23.9	11.6
2011	2.56	23.5	10.7
2012	2.54	23.3	10.2
2013	2.52	23.0	9.8
2014	2.50	22.7	9.6
2015	2.46	22.2	9.5
2016	2.43	21.7	9.2
2017	2.41	21.3	9.0
2002-17	-3.6%	-1.8%	-32.8%

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2017*

- a The average number of children born alive to a woman during her child-bearing span (15-49 years) if she were to bear children. For example, a girl born in 2002 would be expected to have, on average, 2.5 children in her lifetime if she bore children.
- b Births per 1 000 people in a given year.
- c Deaths per 1 000 people in a given year.

Infant and under-five mortality rate, 2002-17

<i>Year</i>	<i>Infant mortality rate^a</i>	<i>Under-five mortality rate^b</i>
2002	48.1	71.3
2003	48.1	71.6
2004	48.7	71.8
2005	49.1	72.5
2006	48.7	71.7
2007	47.8	70.1
2008	46.6	67.6
2009	42.8	63.3
2010	41.1	58.4
2011	39.9	54.4
2012	38.8	51.5
2013	37.4	49.1
2014	36.0	47.1
2015	34.0	44.7
2016	33.5	43.6
2017	32.8	42.4
2002-17	-31.8%	-40.5%

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2017*

- a The number of deaths of infants under one year of age, per 1 000 live births.
- b The number of children who die by the age of five, per 1 000 live births.

Health

Number and proportion of people HIV-positive, 2002-17

Year	Total population		Population aged 15-49	
	People HIV-positive (millions)	Proportion of the total population	Proportion of the population HIV-positive	Proportion of women HIV-positive
2002	4.94	10.9%	17.7%	20.2%
2003	5.09	11.2%	17.8%	20.4%
2004	5.23	11.3%	17.9%	20.6%
2005	5.35	11.5%	17.9%	20.7%
2006	5.47	11.7%	17.9%	20.7%
2007	5.60	11.9%	18.0%	20.8%
2008	5.77	12.0%	18.1%	21.0%
2009	5.92	12.1%	18.2%	21.2%
2010	6.08	12.3%	18.3%	21.3%
2011	6.25	12.3%	18.4%	21.5%
2012	6.41	12.4%	18.4%	21.5%
2013	6.54	12.4%	18.4%	21.5%
2014	6.67	12.5%	18.3%	21.4%
2015	6.80	12.5%	18.2%	21.3%
2016	6.93	12.6%	18.1%	21.3%
2017	7.06	12.6%	18.0%	21.2%
2002-17	42.9%	15.6%	1.7%	5.0%

Source: Stats SA, Mid-year population estimates 2017