

# Transforming Healthcare in Africa in 2023

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Africa Health   
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In the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors across Africa, including South Africa – the continent's largest economy - are experiencing a positive transformation driven by digital advancements and a renewed focus on improving patient outcomes.

Research suggests that by embracing digital transformation, countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa have the potential to achieve up to 15% efficiency gains in total healthcare expenditures by 2030.

As healthcare expenses on the continent are anticipated to persistently escalate in 2023, key industry stakeholders are leveraging digital healthcare solutions to contain costs, bolster their competitive edge, and broaden healthcare accessibility.

Consequently, healthcare consumers look set to continue to adopt digital health services in 2023, which have expanded steadily since the pandemic. Amid these ongoing changes, the pharmaceutical,

medical, and biotech sectors are positioning themselves as healthcare industry leaders, driving innovation on the continent.

## Achieving UHC in Africa

Despite facing challenges, the 47 Member States of the WHO African Region are dedicated to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Significant progress has been made in recent years, with some countries seeing major improvements in service coverage index (SCI) values. Recent research emphasises the need for resilient health systems, integrated service delivery, and learning from shared experiences to further advance UHC efforts in the region.

As we move into 2023, achieving universal health coverage remains a top priority for the South African government. However, overcoming delivery challenges will require effective private-sector engagement and the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in healthcare. A

collaborative approach will ensure that innovative solutions and resources are leveraged to provide comprehensive healthcare access to all citizens.

## Immunisations and Vaccines

In 2023, childhood immunisation, a major factor driving life expectancy, is expected to rebound as healthcare systems and logistics return to normalcy following the pandemic's disruptions. Malaria vaccines are expected to be more widely administered across Africa. However, the resurgence of polio due to low vaccination uptake calls for continued vigilance.

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Facilities in Rwanda and South Africa are establishing commercial production of COVID-19 vaccines. These developments herald an upswing in localised production and signal significant progress in African healthcare's ongoing battle against infectious diseases.

### SA Outlook

In South Africa, a dual healthcare system currently operates, consisting of the public sector and the rapidly expanding private sector. As with previous years, the nation allocates a considerable portion of its GDP to healthcare. Yet, despite the substantial investment, health outcomes remain worse than those of comparable middle-income countries, primarily due to disparities between the public and private sectors.

However, amid continuous changes, the South African health sector has observed remarkable progress in 2022, setting the stage for an optimistic outlook in 2023. There is hope among experts that cutting-edge technologies and ground-breaking innovations could propel the growth and transformation of the country's health sector.

### Public Healthcare Provision

To address the inequality within South Africa's healthcare system, the government is implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI) to establish universal healthcare. This initiative aims to provide essential healthcare services and financial protection to all citizens, irrespective of their ability to pay.

The NHI seeks to establish the National Health Insurance Fund, a public entity governed by the Public Finance Management Act, acting as a single public purchaser and financier of health services in the country, ensuring equitable and fair distribution of the nation's healthcare resources and medical capacity.

On February 16, 2023, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the government's intensified efforts to implement the NHI, emphasising that access to quality healthcare is crucial for improving the lives of all South Africans. The phased implementation of the NHI is expected to begin once the necessary legislation is approved by Parliament.

### Private Healthcare Provision

The private healthcare sector in South Africa continued to expand in 2022. The sector witnessed increased investment from both local and international players. The provision of the highest standard of specialised healthcare services will also continue to attract medical tourists seeking high-quality healthcare at competitive prices. In 2023, the private healthcare sector is expected to continue growing, with a focus on providing high-quality services and increasing access to advanced medical technologies.

Africa Health 2023 will highlight the tremendous potential and opportunities for all stakeholders in the healthcare industry,

and as with previous events, industry leaders are expected to emphasise the importance of continued investment, innovation, and collaboration in shaping a healthier and more resilient future for Africa.

The event returns to **Gallagher Estate in October**. More information is available at [africahealthexhibition.com](https://africahealthexhibition.com)



To learn more about the African healthcare industry, join us live, in-person in Johannesburg, South Africa from 17-19 October 2023.

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