

## **DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PHC PACKAGE FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

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Since the primary health care was at the heart of the plans to transform the health services in South Africa, an integrated package of essential primary health care services available to the entire population would provide the solid foundations of a single, unified health system.

The Health Systems Trust undertook the responsibility to drive the process of developing and piloting the PHC package. The primary health care package was defined following detailed consultation over four years with national experts and provincial staff.

The project implemented a road show program training health managers, service providers, local government councilors and community health forums about the package.

The project then implemented the package in Thabo Mofutsanyane health district in the eastern Free State province as a means to assess feasibility, affordability and issues of conflict of resources. It also monitored the improvement of local planning, implementation and evaluation capacities for PHC in the district.

The National Health Act requires the production of norms and standards to be used by provinces to provide health services at acceptable levels. Provision of acceptable levels of service to all people helps the process of redistribution and reduction of inequalities.

All necessary components of a comprehensive primary care package are described and norms and standards for each component are provided. All the norms and standards are verifiable by staff providing the service. An attempt has been made to ensure that the standards are practical, essential and comprehensive and describes the range of services that should be available to all South Africans.

The document is about what services at what standard are required. The standards do not specify how the services are to be provided and at what level the standards will be met.

The PHC package document was endorsed as national policy document and launched by the national Minister of Health at Thabo Mofutsanyane district municipality where it was developed and piloted.