

FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the 17th edition of the *District Health Barometer (DHB)* – a vital statistical and analytical resource that provides an overall view of district health performance on key health systems indicators in South Africa.

This edition of the DHB provides information across a wide range of district health services, covers over 30 indicators and continues to provide policy-makers, health workers, planners, researchers, academics and stakeholders a unique overview of the performance of public health services in South Africa. By providing a detailed analysis of health indicators, trends, and challenges at the district level, the DHB equips district managers and other stakeholders with the data necessary to identify priorities, plan and implement targeted interventions, and monitor progress. This edition was also supplemented with the publication of the District Health Profiles, which provides more in-depth information at local-municipality/subdistrict level where available.

This edition not only tracks key health system indicators but also expands its scope, reflecting the evolving landscape of healthcare challenges and opportunities. Notably, it includes a chapter on the health impacts of climate change in South Africa, highlighting the challenges the health sector faces and advocates for the health system to make the necessary preparations to address these impacts and emphasises the need for indicators to measure and mitigate adverse effects.

We have also improved the functionality of our online dashboard introduced in 2024 which offers dynamic, user-friendly access to subdistrict-level data. These enhancements mark a shift toward more responsive and accessible health intelligence, empowering decision-makers to drive evidence-based improvements in service delivery.

This edition would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of the HST team, along with the many contributors and collaborators who have worked tirelessly to develop this invaluable resource. Their commitment ensures that the DHB remains a vital tool for strengthening the health system through data-driven insights.

We hope the DHB continues to support evidence-informed decision-making, driving meaningful improvements in district health services and contributing to a healthier future for all South Africans. As always, we welcome feedback on its relevance and impact, as well as suggestions for enhancing future editions.

Dr Themba L. Moeti

Chief Executive Officer | Health Systems Trust