

Foreword

Health Systems Trust is pleased to present this ninth edition of the District Health Barometer (DHB), the only publication of its kind in South Africa that offers comparative data of the different health services at implementation level with an overview of district health performance at the primary health level, including district hospitals.

The DHB is in high demand among a range of stakeholders – both in South Africa and abroad – involved in management information, research development, civil society monitoring and media dissemination, who value its reliable, credible and accessibly packaged data on key health, financial and socio-economic indicators.

The DHB is widely known for providing data to inform the development of District Health Plans and the National Department of Health's Annual Performance Plan; as such, the publication has been used extensively for strategic planning and district monitoring. To support this level of usage more actively by ensuring adequate lead-time for content, Health Systems Trust has released the previous two DHB editions for dissemination before the start of the District Health Plans' development process.

Moreover, as was done with the last year's edition, the findings of the 2013/14 edition will be discussed with health managers in most districts in all provinces, enabling them to interrogate, extrapolate and give feedback on the data, towards improving performance and health service delivery in general.

This edition includes 46 indicators with trend illustrations and profiles of South Africa, the nine provinces and the 52 districts. It also includes chapters on progress toward equity, burden of disease, ranking of district health system performance and data quality.

We urge health workers, managers, researchers and policy-makers to make use of this important material towards heightening the quality of health services provided to South Africa's citizens. The content in this and future DHB publications will also assist users in improving the quality of data and information relating to public health services.

Commentary and feedback that will facilitate further enhancement of future editions of the DHB are welcomed.

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