

Foreword

It is a pleasure to introduce the second South African District Health Barometer, the 2005/06 DHB. This year, as with the pilot DHB year 1 report, which was published in 2005, the District Health Barometer endeavours to provide a tool that transforms routinely collected service level data, into information that leads to action.

The DHB year 1 report enjoyed a good response both nationally and internationally. Managers from all levels of the health sector have responded favourably, agreeing that it has been a useful tool for planning purposes.

This year, with valuable input from the DHB advisory group, we hope that the report will prove to be an even more useful and popular publication.

The composition of the report this year provides:

- ◆ comparisons of all 53 districts across a number of indicators
- ◆ comparisons among rural nodes and metro districts for each indicator,
- ◆ maps demonstrating district performance across South Africa by indicator,
- ◆ comparisons of the change in performance for each of the 53 districts,
- ◆ district profiles for each district.

Inequities between rural and urban areas are addressed throughout the report.

One of the intentions of this report is to improve feedback to the national health information system and to continue to improve transparency of the performance of the health sector. Ideally the DHB should function as a catalyst and a tool to improve quality and use of health information at all levels in the health sector.

For our prime target audience, the managers at national, provincial and district level, we hope that the DHB will assist with strategic planning purposes, with M&E of district performance and health service delivery and with more equitable resource allocation.

We trust that the DHB will also address the needs of users such as politicians and policy makers, with the graphic and pictorial representation allowing a clear presentation and thus an understanding of issues of quality and equity in the health sector. Other sectors, such as Treasury, the academic sector and the international health community will also be able to gain greater insight into the performance of the health sector at district level.



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