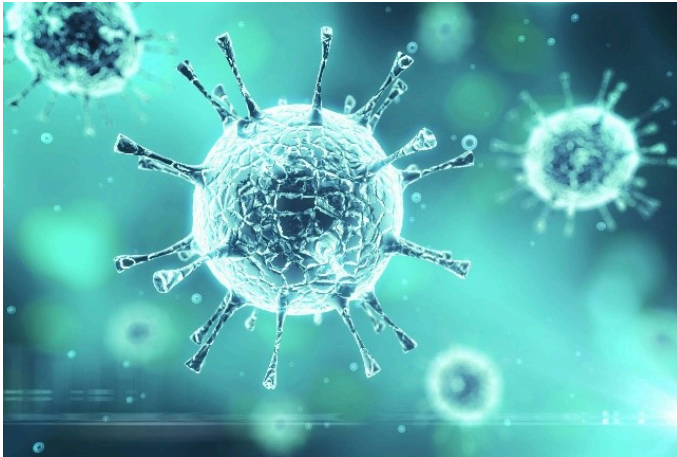
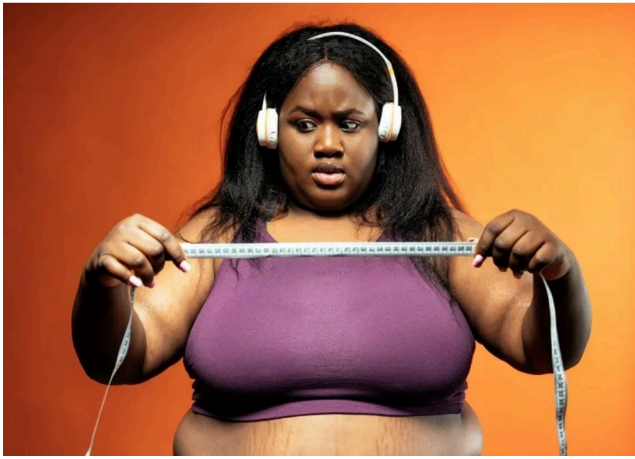


**60percent****HST 60percent 15 March 2024**[View this email in your browser](#)**Dapivirine ring and oral PrEP found safe for preventing HIV in pregnant women***Contemporary OB/GYN | 6 March 2024*

Utilization of the monthly dapivirine vaginal ring and daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) with tenofovir disoproxil fumarate and emtricitabine are both safe among pregnant cisgender women for HIV prevention, according to recent data presented at the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections. The risk of HIV is increased 3-fold among pregnant women compared to similarly aged nonpregnant individuals. The World Health Organization recommends the dapivirine ring, a flexible silicone that vaginally administers an antiretroviral drug, to prevent HIV.

**SA scientists warn of HIV-like obesity epidemic**



*Juta Medical Brief | 6 March 2024*

With obesity rates rising at an alarming rate, according to a new World Health Organisation (WHO) study, South African researchers say the problem in this country – where more than two-thirds of women are overweight – is akin to a "new HIV epidemic" and calls for urgent measures, writes Medical Brief. In an editorial in the SA Medical Journal, the group respected scientists said the nation needed to pay attention, because "as with the HIV epidemic in the 1990s, we're facing a calamitous threat to the health of the population that has been ignored for too long". Weight-related diseases have eclipsed TB and HIV as leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Type 2 diabetes, stroke and heart disease, conditions all directly linked to the disease of obesity, account for three of the top four causes of death nationally and incur massive health system costs.

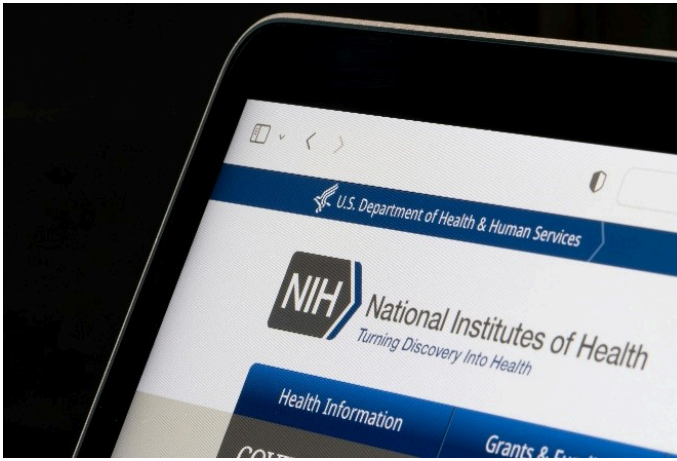
### **Global study finds new genetic risk factors for type 2 diabetes**



*Juta Medical Brief | 6 March 2024*

The risk factors for type 2 diabetes are both environmental and genetic, and while researchers have identified many genetic risk factors thus far, the largest ever genome-wide association study of people with type 2 diabetes has discovered even more locations of risk variants than before. It has also identified different clusters of variants adding to the risk of developing the disease, revealing more about the different mechanisms underpinning the disease, reports Medical News Today.

### **NIH study finds long-acting ART safe for HIV suppression in adolescents**



Contemporary OB/GYN | 7 March 2024

Adolescents with HIV viral suppression can safely use long-acting, injectable antiretroviral therapy (ART), which has displayed improved HIV suppression compared to oral ART in individuals with difficulty taking daily oral regimens, according to data presented at the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver. The National Institutes of Health funded research to expand upon the 2021 FDA approval of long-acting cabotegravir and rilpivirine for individuals with viral suppression. Two trials were conducted to evaluate use of the drug regimen in populations with lacking data.

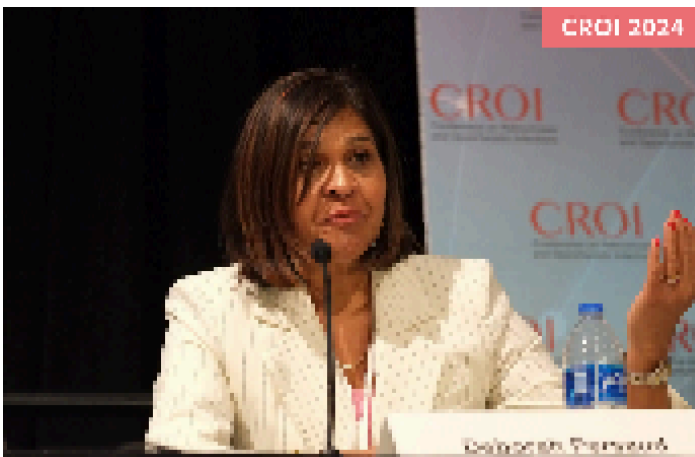
### Could many dementia cases actually be liver disease?



The Conversation | 7 March 2024

A recent study of US veterans found that 10% of those diagnosed with dementia actually had a liver condition called hepatic encephalopathy (HE) – a treatable condition. The liver can be damaged by several things, including alcohol, fatty deposits and hepatitis viruses. When the damage continues over several years, the liver becomes scarred (known as cirrhosis) and, at a certain point, can no longer perform one of its critical tasks: detoxifying the blood. Toxins (mainly ammonia) can build up and get into the brain, interfering with brain function. This is HE.

### Some children who start antiretrovirals very early may control HIV after stopping treatment



Aidsmap | 7 March 2024

A small proportion of children who start HIV treatment within the first two days of life may achieve ongoing viral suppression after stopping antiretrovirals, according to study results presented yesterday at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024). While these promising findings hold clues for HIV cure research, such early therapy is out of reach for many, and treatment interruption remains risky without careful monitoring. Out of 54 children who acquired HIV in the womb and started combination antiretroviral therapy (ART) within 48 hours after birth, six had undetectable HIV and met other eligibility criteria for a closely monitored treatment interruption. Of these, four had sustained viral remission for at least a year.

### **HIV remission among children reported over 1 year after treatment interruption**



*Contemporary OB/GYN | 7 March 2024*

Following the pausing of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV treatment, 4 children have achieved over a year of HIV remission, according to data presented at the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver. The study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, employed an ART regimen within 48 hours of birth. Participants included children infected with HIV prior to birth who were closely monitored for HIV viral suppression and drug safety.

### **Investing in equality: How young women are innovating to improve their health, rights and lives**



*United Nations Population Fund | 7 March 2024*

"I lead a team of six amazing women, with specialties from pharmaceutical supply chains to software engineering and digital marketing – our journey so far in empowering young women to take charge of their health, has been nothing short of amazing," said 26-year-old Chioma Uzoma from Nigeria. Ms. Uzoma is among 14 winners of the female-led 4HerPower Challenge, an initiative between UNFPA – the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency – MIT Solve and Organon, to support innovations in sexual and reproductive health and rights access for young people across the world.

## Community influencers do their bit to reduce the number of HIV infections in young women across Southern Africa



*IOL | 7 March 2024*

On International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, the spotlight is on the remarkable community influencers who have dedicated themselves to reducing HIV prevalence, particularly among young women. Dr Ziyanda Makaba, Clinical Specialist for HIV and Paediatrics at BroadReach Health Development, highlighted the concerning statistic that women and girls accounted for over 60% of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa in 2022.

## Examining a Newer Therapy for Heavily Treated HIV Patients



*ContagionLive | 7 March 2024*

People with multi-drug resistant (MDR) HIV have limited antiretroviral therapy (ART) options, which can leave their disease management very challenging. "The patients who meet this definition tend to be very well known to us," Onyema Ogbuagu, MBBCh, FACP, FIDSA, director of HIV Clinical Trials program at Yale School of Medicine, said. "I provide HIV care, and we all know many of these patients tend to be people who have long [been] in HIV care—it is typically not the newly infected."

## International Women's Day: Protect women and girls rights to protect their health





*IOL | 8 March 2024*

The United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has called for protecting women's rights to protect their health on International Women's Day which is celebrated on March 8. UNAIDS' call this International Women's Day, is to protect women and girls' health, protect women and girls' rights. In doing so, the world will end Aids and will overcome the inequalities driving it.

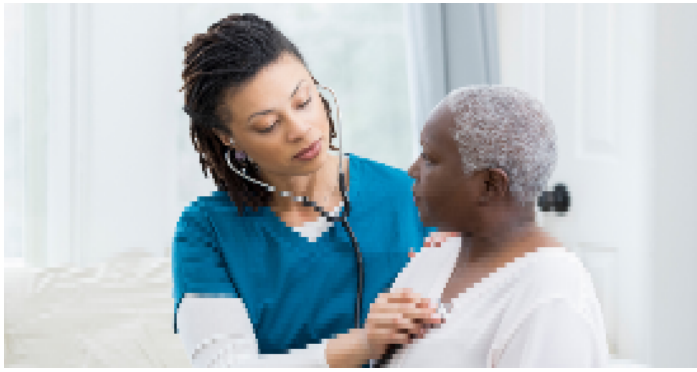
### **Only by protecting women's rights can we protect women's health**



*Mail & Guardian | 8 March 2024*

The world is way off track to meet the gender targets that were set in the sustainable development goals. At the current rate of progress, it will take an estimated 300 years to end child marriage, 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in parliaments. The global debt crisis is squeezing out investment in education, health and social protection, particularly hurting women and girls. Unequal access to education has left 122 million girls out of school, denying them lifesaving information on how to protect themselves from HIV.

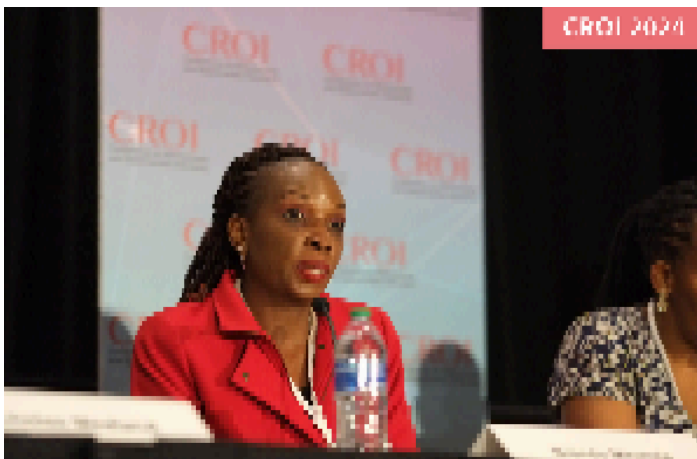
### **Advancement of women's health in the African region**



*Omnia Health | 8 March 2024*

Around the world, women play vital roles that support entrepreneurship, community development, caregiving responsibilities, resilience, leadership potential, and cultural influence. It is important to note that the proportion of women in Africa has increased dramatically, making up more than half of the continent's population. The number of women in the African region increased by 73 per cent from 336.6 million in 2000 to an estimated 583.2 million in 2021. This indicates a growth rate of roughly 3.4 per cent per year. In 2021, women made up 50.14 per cent of the region's overall population.

### **Six-country African PrEP study achieves high levels of persistence and good adherence in young women**



*Aidsmap | 8 March 2024*

A demonstration project of oral PrEP for young women, conducted in six African countries with high HIV prevalence, achieved high levels of PrEP uptake and persistence, and good levels of adherence among its 3000 participants. Dr Brenda Mirembe of Makerere University told the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) that the use of a rapid urine test to measure tenofovir levels and confirm adherence was generally seen as supportive by the participants. But despite high levels of PrEP use, HIV annual incidence remained quite high at 1.38% – or one infection in every 72 participants a year. This is not much lower than the current estimated incidence among young women in South Africa (about 1.5% a year).

### **National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2024**



Poz | 8 March 2024

Sunday, March 10, is National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD) 2024. This year marks the 19th annual observation of NWGHAAD, the theme of which is “Prevention and Testing at Every Age. Care and Treatment at Every Stage.” Organized by the Office on Women’s Health, a division of the Department of Health & Human Services, NWGHAAD is important, according to WomensHealth.gov fact sheet, because: HIV and AIDS are still widespread public health issues, and women continue to remain vulnerable to infection—especially African-American and Hispanic women. In fact, any woman who has sex can get HIV, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation. An estimated 1 million people in the United States had HIV at the end of 2020, the most recent year for which this information is available.

## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DRIVING PROGRESS TO ELIMINATE MOTHER-TO-CHILD HIV TRANSMISSION IN INDONESIA



UNAIDS | 8 March 2024

Ibu Mawar (not her real name) learned she was living with HIV after receiving a test during an antenatal care visit. “I was surprised, of course, when they told me. But I didn’t really doubt or deny the result,” she remembered from the Sorong City Health Office in West Papua. She immediately started treatment to prevent transmission to her son. “Even though I’m positive,” she said, “our child is not.” In principle, since 2009 every pregnant woman receiving antenatal care in Indonesia should receive an HIV test. And every woman found to be living with HIV should receive medicines to prevent transmission to their babies just as Ms Mawar did. But this isn’t yet the reality. In 2022 more than one-third (37%) of all pregnant women in Indonesia did not get screened for HIV and just 18% of mothers living with HIV had access to antiretroviral therapy. There were an estimated 2800 new HIV infections among children that year.

## How to start your next HPV test at home



*Bhekisisa | 8 March 2024*

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a bug that can cause cervical cancer if the infection is left untreated for too long. If the infection is caught early, it can be treated before cancer develops. Doing a self-sampling test can help women check for an HPV infection more regularly than waiting to get a Pap smear — which is only every 10 years if you use state healthcare — and so help them get treatment before things get out of hand. In this video experts break down how these self-sampling screening tests work.

### **Watch HIV Scientists at CROI 2024 Discuss a Promising Study on Newborns**



*Poz | 8 March 2024*

On the final day of the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), HIV.gov spoke with Deborah Persaud, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Director of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Johns Hopkins Children's Center, who reported findings from a study about whether very early initiation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) may limit the establishment of HIV reservoirs in newborns, potentially enabling ART-free remission. Dr. Persaud spoke with Catey Laube of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). Watch our conversation with Dr. Persaud at the top of this article.

### **Gauteng government ramps up efforts to curb STIs with free condoms**



IOL | 11 March 2024

The Gauteng Department of Health wants to assure the public that male and female condoms are still available for free at a variety of locations, including universities, clinics, taverns, hostels, hospitals, motels, brothels, workplaces, primary distribution sites, and key population hot spots. These facilities get condom supplies on a regular basis that corresponds with their storage capacity. Delivery can take place on a daily, weekly or monthly schedule.

### **At the 68th Commission on Status of Women UNAIDS calls for action to achieve gender equality and end AIDS**



UNAIDS | 11 March 2024

UNAIDS is gearing up for the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (#CSW68) which begins today and will run until 22 March 2024. #CSW68, the United Nations largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment, is being held this year under the priority theme, Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

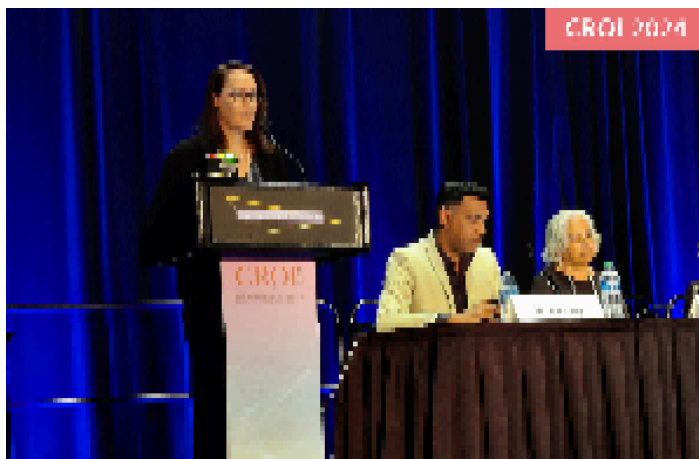
### **Study finds no increased stress urinary incontinence recurrence risk from childbirth**



Contemporary OB/GYN | 11 March 2024

Stress urinary incontinence (SUI) recurrence risk is not increased by subsequent pregnancy and childbirth, according to a recent study published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. Approximately 20% to 25% of women worldwide experience SUI, which adversely impacts quality of life. The midurethral sling (MUS) procedure is the recommended treatment with success rates up to 85%.

## HIV medication dolutegravir not linked with increased blood pressure during pregnancy



*Aidsmap | 11 March 2024*

Dolutegravir did not increase the risk of high blood pressure during pregnancy in a large international study, but mildly raised blood pressure was common in young women with HIV, Professor Risa Hoffman reported on behalf of the IMPAACT 2010 study team at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) in Denver last week.

## Ultra-long-acting cabotegravir could be taken three times a year for HIV PrEP and treatment



*Aidsmap | 12 March 2024*

A longer-acting formulation of cabotegravir may offer an HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and treatment option that could be administered once every four months, according to early study results presented last week at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024). A small phase I trial showed that the new ultra-long-acting formulation given by subcutaneous or intramuscular injection every four months achieves comparable drug exposure but lasts longer in the body than the approved formulation administered every two months, reported Dr Kelong Han of GSK, the parent company of ViiV Healthcare.

## What's behind the worldwide shortage of cholera vaccines? For starters, they're only made by one company

# THE CONVERSATION

*The Conversation* | 12 March 2024

In February 2024 the World Health Organization announced southern Africa was suffering the deadliest regional outbreak of cholera in at least a decade. At the epicentre of the disaster were Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where cholera cases surged more than four-fold between 2022 and 2023. Over 1,600 deaths were reported in the three countries.

## **The cornerstone of HIV treatment may be losing some of its power: will dolutegravir resistance become a problem?**



*Aidsmap* | 12 March 2024

A number of presentations at last week's Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) looked at whether HIV is starting to develop resistance to dolutegravir, one of the most widely used antiretrovirals in the world. Guidelines in most parts of the world recommend dolutegravir (or its close cousin, bictegravir) as a component of most people's first HIV treatment regimen.

## **Mixed Digital Intervention Increases HIV Prevention Adherence in Young People**



*Infectious Disease Advisor* | 12 March 2024

HealthDay News — A synergistic effect is seen for multimodal strategies to improve uptake of and adherence to HIV prevention among young people at risk for acquisition, according to a study published in the March issue of *The Lancet Digital Health*. Dallas Swendeman, Ph.D., from the University of California, Los Angeles, and colleagues assessed the efficacy of automated text messaging and monitoring (AMMI), online peer support, and strengths-based telehealth coaching to improve uptake of and adherence to preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP), condom use, and postexposure prophylaxis among 895 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) at risk for HIV acquisition.

## **WHO report reveals gender inequalities at the root of global crisis in health and care**

## work



WHO | 13 March 2024

A new report published by the World Health Organization (WHO), "Fair share for health and care: gender and the undervaluation of health and care work" illustrates how gender inequalities in health and care work negatively impact women, health systems and health outcomes. The report outlines underinvestment in health systems results in a vicious cycle of unpaid health and care work, lowering women's participation in paid labour markets, harming women's economic empowerment and hampering gender equality.

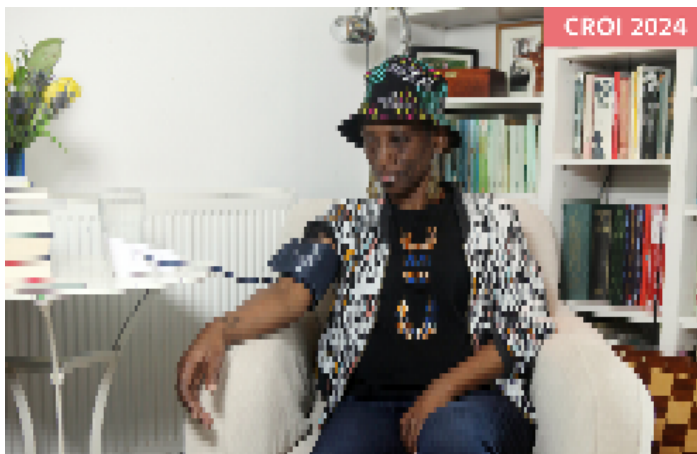
## Global child deaths reach historic low in 2022 – UN report



WHO | 13 March 2024

The number of children who died before their fifth birthday has reached a historic low, dropping to 4.9 million in 2022, according to the latest estimates released today by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). "Behind these numbers lie the stories of midwives and skilled health personnel helping mothers safely deliver their newborns, health workers vaccinating and protecting children against deadly diseases, and community health workers who make home visits to support families to ensure the right health and nutrition support for children," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell.

## Women with HIV need tailored advice on statins and heart disease risk





Aidsmap | 13 March 2024

Counselling about heart disease risk and statin use for women with HIV should highlight the similar levels of risk for men and women with HIV when communicating the results of the REPRIEVE study, one of the study's investigators told the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI 2024) in Denver, US, last week. Advice also needs to make women aware of how the symptoms of heart disease differ in women and men.

## New WHO Report Finds Women Perform 76% of Unpaid Healthcare Activities



Health Policy Watch | 13 March 2024

Women perform an estimated 76% of all unpaid healthcare activities, according to a new WHO report on gender-based discrimination in healthcare. Globally, it has been estimated that women spend between two and ten times more time on unpaid health care work than men, amounting to a total of 16.4 billion hours per day.

## The Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA) – calling all public health champions!



PHASA is a voluntary organisation of individuals passionate about population health improvements and the reduction of health inequities, and whose work focuses on the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, and the improved functioning of the country's health care system. Are you passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of communities? Do you want to expand your professional network and stay current in the field of public health? Do you want to be part of the movement to improve Public Health? Then join the Public Health Association of South Africa today to make a difference and enhance your career!

As a member, you will:

- Gain access to cutting-edge research, resources, and best practices
- Connect with public health professionals from around the world
- Participate in educational events and conferences
- Contribute to shaping the future of public health

- Have access to mentors in the field
- Be at the forefront of advocacy initiatives.

To become a member, simply visit our [website](#) and complete the membership application. Don't miss this opportunity to advance your career and improve public health.

<https://phasa.org.za/index.php/get-involved/membership>

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