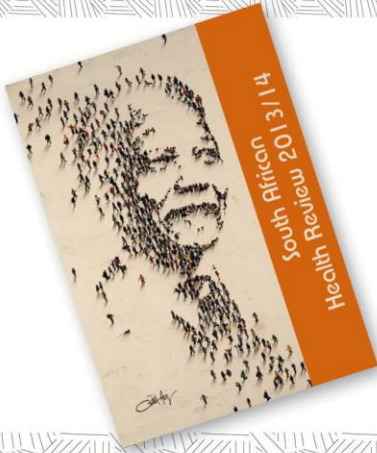




HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST



INNOVATIONS IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: CONSIDERATIONS FOR NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SAHR KWIK SKWIZ SERIES

This KWIK SKWIZ:



summarises Chapter 4 of the 2013/14 South African Health Review.

- South Africa is undertaking major reforms in its health sector to prepare for the introduction of financing reforms under the National Health Insurance (NHI). In 2012, the National Department of Health (NDoH) completed a baseline audit of public sector facilities in provinces. Results provided evidence for the changes required for improving the quality of services especially at primary health care level.
- The Office of Health Standards and Compliance (OHSC), launched in early 2014, provides a regulatory environment that will encourage innovations to improve the quality of health services in both public and private health sectors. Standards are being used to assess services, stimulate improvements and overcome the current inequities in access to high quality care.
- The 'Ideal Clinic' initiative is a key government intervention in response to current deficiencies in health services. Designed to respond directly to factors undermining the quality of services, the initiative aims to provide a community-based services that will ensure continuity of care over time, across services and possibly empower and bring more accountability to the local community.
- The Ideal Clinic programme focuses on the local community but also interacts with the wider District Health System (DHS) and the District Clinical Support Teams (DCSTs) to improve local impact. The initiative has adopted the integrated clinical guidelines developed under the 'Primary Health Care 101' initiative, aiming to equip nurses and clinicians to diagnose and manage common conditions at primary level.
- These efforts are being scaled up alongside others to strengthen district and facility performance. Two collaborating systems for monitoring progress have been established – the Internal NDoH monitoring system for the Ideal Clinic and the inspections of the OHSC – to ensure that future assessments and responses are aligned and lead to improvements in the quality of service provision.
- Many countries are exploring various mechanisms for improving universal access to high-quality, affordable health services through social franchising of health services, which involves providing incentives for the roll-out of services of standardised quality as part of a broader set of changes in the health sector.

- Social franchising has four primary goals of relevance to South Africa, which seek to improve:
 - » **access**, by increasing the number of service delivery points (providers) and healthcare services offered
 - » **cost-effectiveness**, by providing services at an equal or lower cost to other service delivery options;
 - » **quality**, by ensuring that the services provided adhere to quality standards and improve on the pre-existing level of quality; and
 - » **equity**, by serving all population groups, focusing on those most in need.
- International case studies note that a social franchising approach must be customised to the national policies, regulations and management of a specific country in which a programme is being implemented. A South African model would need its own terminology, and the Ideal Clinic initiative, with its focus on quality improvement, is an innovation in itself that may develop its own terminology and approaches based on experience. Innovations may also be required in other areas, such as building on the use of incentives to improve rural coverage of health services.
- Effective collaboration between all stakeholders (users, health workers, managers, researchers and policy developers) is needed in order to consolidate appropriate decision-making.
- The financing reforms under NHI, and the initial work of the OHSC, provide the context for more experimentation in situations where various options can be explored. It is possible to design different approaches to allow for a comparison of progress and outcomes in expanding quality primary health care services.

SOURCE:

Fryatt, B, Hunter J, Matsoso P. Innovations in primary health care: considerations for National Health Insurance. In Padarath A, English R, editors. South African Health Review 2013/14. Durban: Health Systems Trust; 2014.

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**HST welcomes comments on this publication.
Please send input to:**

The Editor
Health Systems Trust
34 Essex Terrace, Westville 3630
Tel: +27 (0)31 266 9090
Fax: +27 (0)31 266 9199
Email: editor@hst.org.za