



THE IDEAL CLINIC IN SOUTH AFRICA: PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION SAHR KWIK SKWIZ SERIES

This KWIK SKWIZ:



summarises Chapter 2 of the 2014/15 South African Health Review.

- The Ideal Clinic initiative is one among various strategies designed to address current deficiencies in the quality of primary health care (PHC) services in South Africa, and as such lays a strong foundation for the successful implementation of National Health Insurance.
- Conceptually, the Ideal Clinic aims to provide a community-based, comprehensive range of integrated diagnostic, curative, preventive, promotive, rehabilitative and palliative services to users of the public health system. The implementation of the initiative has its roots in the findings of a Baseline Audit commissioned by the National Department of Health (NDoH) and published in 2013, which showed that public health facilities in South Africa collectively scored less than 50% compliance with vital measures, while scoring 34% in patient safety and security and 30% in the area of positive and caring attitudes.
- The desired status represented by the 'Ideal Clinic' nomenclature is articulated as a clinic with good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medicine and supplies, good administrative processes and adequate bulk supplies that use applicable clinical policies, protocols, guidelines as well as partner and stakeholder support.
- During the Ideal Clinic concept design phase from July 2013 to March 2014, four teams (each consisting of a doctor and a nurse with public health PHC experience) worked with 10 PHC facilities in four NHI pilot districts in four different provinces. Using the Ideal Clinic dashboard, the nurse–doctor teams identified weaknesses in the clinics and worked with facility, sub-district, district, provincial and National Department of Health managers to make changes and improvements.
- Some of the bottlenecks identified were persistent, requiring extensive remedial planning and collaboration with technical experts in the private sector, non-governmental organisations, other government departments and managers at different levels of the health sector. Interventions to resolve bottlenecks were developed into specific projects that became known as 'transversal levers'. Each of these required intensive co-ordination, specific objectives, agreed milestones and regular communication between relevant stakeholders.
- Implementation of the Ideal Clinic concept will see the Ideal Clinic at the centre of a community-based PHC service that

incorporates School Health, Ward-based Outreach Teams and Environmental Health. An effective service delivery platform of this kind is important for the success of national strategic programmes such as the integrated plan for HIV and TB, family planning, and maternal and child health services, as well as the country's PHC package of services.

- A well-performing district health system is the bedrock for sustaining Ideal Clinics. The national District Health System (DHS) policy, which provides the enabling environment for delivering the PHC package of services, creates a framework for rendering comprehensive quality health services through an efficient, effective and equitable resource allocation model.
- The work done since July 2013 and the method applied in its execution is part of "Operation Phakisa" (meaning 'hurry up' in Sesotho), which was adapted from the 'Big Fast Results' approach used by the government of Malaysia to achieve rapid transformation within a short space of time to address national priorities such as poverty, crime and unemployment.
- The National Health Council (NHC) approved the Operation Phakisa Ideal Clinic report in May 2015 with amendments. Many but not all of the 80 initiatives were accepted by the NHC, and the budget required for specific interventions is being finalised. The process of determining specific activity-based costs is facilitating further refinement of the initiatives.
- Ideal Clinic training is being conducted at provincial and district level through an online self-assessment system that has been piloted for use in the scale-up process. An Ideal Clinic manual covering all elements and how they should be assessed and rectified is being piloted and will form the basis of routine training and orientation for all PHC facility managers.

SOURCE:

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