



Foreword

The 12th edition of South African Health Review (SAHR) is a departure from earlier Reviews. This edition focuses on the role of the private sector, a part of the health system that has not previously been accorded extensive coverage in the SAHR. The contrast between the public and private sectors remains stark in many facets and the deepening inequity is cause for profound concern. The significance of the private sector cannot be underestimated both with regard to its potential contribution to the health and well-being of this country's people, as well as its role in drawing resources (financial and human) from the public sector.

The intention is to heighten awareness and understanding of a sector that receives much media attention, but rather less thorough analysis outside of specialist forums. The Review seeks to stimulate critical discourse and to encourage wider participation in policy debate. A variety of aspects of the private sector are examined that shed light upon oversight, the pooling of resources and purchasing of health care, health care delivery and health indicators.

Two chapters are perhaps of special importance in this endeavour. One is the review of Medical Schemes and related legislation that the Ministry of Health has promulgated to contribute to the reduction of inequity between the public and private health sectors. The second also focuses on efforts to reduce inequity, specifically through the introduction of Social or National Health Insurance, and analyses various models that have been proposed over the years.

Other chapters cover issues of Stewardship, Health Policy and Legislation, Health Care Financing and Expenditure, Health Information Systems, Human Resources, Private Hospitals, HIV/AIDS, STI and TB in the Private Sector, as well as Health and Related Indicators.

Above all we hope that this edition of the SAHR will contribute to harnessing and integrating the private and public sectors, which despite the explicit intention to have one health system in South Africa, remain largely separate.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Health Systems Trust (HST) I would like to extend our special thanks to Stephen Harrison, from the Council for Medical Schemes, who is the Guest Editor of this 2007 Review, and who has brought his considerable knowledge and expertise to refine and augment the contents. I also wish to thank all authors, contributors and reviewers who have generously given their time. Thanks are also due to the SAHR Advisory Committee and the HST Board of Trustees for their input and guidance. I would like to acknowledge and especially thank the editorial team for their hard work in once again succeeding in producing a Review within extraordinarily tight timeframes, as well as the many HST staff who participated in the production of this SAHR.

The national Department of Health has contributed both to the planning and review process and has also made information available to authors and editors. HST extends our appreciation and thanks for their input and support.



T. Patrick Masobe

Chairperson of the Board of Trustees