

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

As we reach the 10th year of freedom and democracy it is important to reflect on the legacy that we inherited and our achievements. It is equally important to assess the challenges that lie ahead so that we can plan to meet these challenges as effectively as we can, given the resources at our disposal.

Trend data presented in this plan suggests that we are making a difference in the health of our people despite the numerous challenges that we face. These challenges include the changing demographic, economic and political environment that South Africa finds itself in.

While we are not entirely at the mercy of global forces we are affected by the changing value of our currency relative to those we trade with, the migration of people between provinces as reflected in the 2001 census, the migration of labour as reflected in migration of health professions, the changing patterns of diseases so that whilst we have to deal with communicable diseases we also have to deal with diseases of lifestyle and the increases in trauma and violence and the difficulty to recruit and retain health professionals in the public sector in general and in rural areas in particular.

This strategic plan summarises the key achievements of the Department of Health in 2003/04 and presents a coherent set of activities that address our

challenges, targets for the 2004/05 - 2006/07 MTEF period and indicators that we shall use to monitor progress. We have instituted, during 2003/04 a quarterly monitoring system which we shall strengthen during 2004/05. This system will allow us to monitor progress in implementing the strategic plans of both the national and the provincial Departments of Health.

In addition to meeting our national needs, the Department will strive to fulfil the NEPAD and SADC mandates with respect to the health strategies adopted by the AU ministers of health and the SADC ministers of health. In addition, we will strive to ensure that South Africa meets the challenges set by the Millennium Development Goals.

In conclusion, as we enter the second decade of freedom and democracy we will provide the leadership necessary to deliver on this strategic plan so that all those who live in South Africa will have access to affordable and high quality healthcare.


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