

South African Health Review 2023



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Health Systems Trust
1 Maryvale Road
Westville 3630
Durban
South Africa

Email: sahr@hst.org.za
Website: <http://www.hst.org.za>
Tel: +27 (0)31 266 9090
Fax: +27 (0)31 266 9199

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Foreword

Cancer continues to be one of the most pressing challenges to global health, demanding a comprehensive and coordinated approach to tackle its complexities and widespread impact. In Africa alone, it is estimated that in 2020 there were over 1.1 million new cases diagnosed with close to 2000 lives lost to cancer each day.

Factors contributing to the high morbidity and mortality rates on the continent are issues such as low levels of awareness, limited knowledge which negatively impacts attitudes towards cancer screening, late presentation for cancer diagnosis, and high costs of cancer care. Despite this high disease burden, cancer is yet to receive sufficient attention from policy and decision makers in addressing its impact on individuals, families and communities.

Low- and middle-income countries continue to bear a disproportionate amount of the global cancer burden, and South Africa is no exception. With this in mind, and with the hope that this edition will raise levels of awareness, concern, action and investment in cancer services in the country, I am honoured to introduce the 26th edition of the South African Health Review, which is dedicated to strengthening cancer services in South Africa.

This edition delves into crucial aspects of cancer care, screening, and prevention across the country, illuminating the disparities, inefficiencies, and innovative strategies that define our current healthcare landscape. Articles in this edition address the complex challenges and potential solutions to cancer care and prevention in South Africa, examine inequities in access to care, emphasise the importance of efficient care pathways, highlight the gaps between policy and practice and how these impact patient experiences and treatment outcomes, and underscore the necessity of targeted interventions for vulnerable populations.

On behalf of the Health Systems Trust Board, I extend my deepest gratitude to the SAHR production team, the authors, peer reviewers, and the SAHR Editorial Advisory Committee for their invaluable contributions. The collaborative effort between internal and external peer reviewers, along with the authors' willingness to embrace constructive feedback and engage in editorial discussions, has significantly elevated the quality of this publication.

I am confident that this landmark 26th edition of the SAHR will play a pivotal role in advancing our healthcare system, improving the delivery of services, and fostering a more equitable, effective, and patient-centred approach to combating cancer.



Professor Salome Maswime
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Health Systems Trust

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Project coordinator

Emma-Louise Mackie

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