

HEALTH

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

The health sector is fundamental to ensuring the well-being of all Fijians and the economy. A healthy population contributes to increased productivity and sustainable economic development. Access to quality and modern health services will improve primary and preventative health care for all Fijians. However, the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected resource allocation and service delivery within the sector.

CURRENT STATUS

The health sector is stringently regulated by numerous laws overseeing the professional aspects, service orientation and targeted intervention areas of the health service. These include the Public Health Act (Cap 111), Public Hospital and Dispensaries Act (Cap 110), Private Hospitals Acts (Cap 256 A) and the Medical and Dental Practitioners Decree 2010 to name a few.

As of the 2023-2024 financial year, Fiji's health sector expenditure sits at 3.4% of GDP, which is considered low in relation to international standards and includes Pacific Island Countries such as Samoa, Tonga and Solomon Islands (5-6% of GDP).

However, post-recovery measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly revamped the sector in by enhancing normative service delivery and strengthening the capacity of health systems for quality care.

CHALLENGES

1. *Infrastructure Development*: dilapidated state of infrastructure through regular maintenance and construction.
2. *Improved Service Delivery*: Decentralisation of outpatient services to sub-divisional health centres so as to accommodate rapid rise in

population for a more improved and efficient service delivery.

3. *Outsourcing of health services*: service-level gaps and enhance accountability in service delivery.
4. *Exodus of medical professionals*: address shortage of labour and skilled workers.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Fiji's health sector lies in the following areas:

1. *Infrastructure Development*: enhance facility standards through improved investments in building and upgrading hospitals, health centres and nursing stations.
2. *Regulated healthcare system*: well-managed regulatory system for the decentralising of services whilst key human resource management remain with Headquarters.
3. *Strengthen the resilience of the healthcare system*: investment in essential public health functions and all-hazards emergency risk management, building a strong primary health care foundation, and creating enabling environments for research, innovation, and learning.

FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- **Expand primary health care, with an emphasis on providing a continuum of care and improved service quality and safety:**
 - ✓ Improve health-service delivery experience for patients through continued strengthening of primary health care and improved continuum of care.
 - ✓ Monitor and improve the quality and safety standards in government health facilities.

➤ **Enhance the effectiveness of Fiji's health management and delivery system:**

- ✓ Establish government, community and development partner synergistic and cooperative framework to support Fiji's future modernised and effective health system.
- ✓ Improve multi-sectoral approach to risk management and resilience for communicable diseases, health emergencies, climate change and natural disasters.
- ✓ Improve case detection and coordinated response to reduce communicable disease morbidity and mortality.
- ✓ Formulate policy, planning and budgeting based on sound evidence, considerations of efficiency and cost effectiveness and health information systems that provide relevant, accurate information to the right people at the right time.
- ✓ Recruit, train and retain a qualified, motivated health workforce that is caring, customer-focused, and responsive to population health needs.

➤ **Modernise and maintain health delivery systems and infrastructure to meet increased demands for quality health services:**

- ✓ Ensure that all health facilities in Fiji have the minimum required functional biomedical equipment for the level of the facility.
- ✓ Develop a health infrastructure database and ensure that all MHMS infrastructure is built and maintained to meet operational, and population needs in compliance with all relevant health service standards.
- ✓ Retrofit health facilities to improve energy and water efficiency.
- ✓ Enhance the capacity of emergency services, including ambulance fleets and emergency department facilities, to handle increasing demands.
- ✓ Ensure that health facilities are equipped and prepared to maintain operations during natural disasters, accounting for Fiji's unique geographical challenges.

- ✓ Focus on eco-friendly and sustainable designs in new and upgraded healthcare facility constructions to promote environmental sustainability.

➤ **Provide access to clinical health services to all Fijians:**

- ✓ Increase access to quality, safe and patient-focused clinical services.
- ✓ Facilitate decentralisation of clinical services to sub-divisional hospital to enhance accessibility.
- ✓ Deploy mobile clinics equipped with essential medical supplies and staff to provide regular services in remote areas.
- ✓ Utilise telecommunication technologies for remote diagnosis, treatment, and patient consultation, reducing the need for physical travel.