

Press Release

HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

PRESS RELEASE

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International Forum to Focus on Public Health Financing and Improved Health Outcomes for All Kenyans

NAIROBI, Kenya--On March 18, the Ministry of Health will host a high-level meeting to discuss viable options for the sustainable financing of healthcare in Kenya. The three-day Kenya Health Policy Forum will focus on how to optimise existing resources and future government and donor investments to ensure that all Kenyans, regardless of ability to pay, can access high-quality healthcare services. Related experiences and lessons learned from other countries will be explored, including ways to increase the efficiency of healthcare delivery systems.

The forum, supported by the USAID-funded Health Policy Project and the World Bank, comes at a crucial time in Kenya's history. The current devolution of its public health sector to 47 county governments offers both challenges and opportunities for the management of resources and delivery of healthcare services. The country needs to identify appropriate mechanisms for pooling resources and achieving maximum coverage, especially among the poor and other vulnerable communities.

While Kenya has made good progress in some health indicators, improvements in other areas need to accelerate. For instance, the number of child deaths associated with preventable diseases and number of maternal deaths arising from childbirth and post-partum conditions are still high. In addition, while HIV prevalence has been steadily declining, the number of those infected continues to increase. Tuberculosis has also resurfaced as a major cause of ill health, as well as some noncommunicable diseases, such as cancer. The government's recent decision to eliminate payments for primary healthcare services and maternal health services is a step in the right direction, but this and other changes need to be supported by a strong healthcare system and sustainable financing.

The forum's participants, including local and international experts, will review and advise on financing options and their feasibility in the Kenyan context. The papers presented will include case studies from countries with devolved health systems, such as Brazil, Ghana, and India. Recommendations will focus on how Kenya can both achieve universal health coverage and a high quality of care.

About the Health Policy Project

The Health Policy Project (HPP), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), contributes to improved health through strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of health systems. HPP focuses on the policy aspects of family planning and reproductive health, HIV, and maternal health.

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