

Report: Patients and docs differ on state of health

South Africans generally evaluate their health positively, while healthcare professionals are less optimistic.



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The majority (80%) of the population rating their current health positively (good, very good or excellent), while just one third (33%) of healthcare professionals agree that the overall health of the population in South Africa is positive, according to the [Future Health Index](#).

Healthcare professionals' perceptions are likely driven by their perceptions of access to care, as they are less likely to agree that their patients have access to care across all phases of the continuum compared with the 19-country average.

Despite the discrepancy between the South African general population and healthcare professionals' perception of health, the results suggest that both groups perceive they have more access to healthcare than what the system is set up for in reality, which signals that there is an opportunity to improve access to care further.

Reality vs perception

"Through the Future Health Index, we are examining current realities of how well the healthcare system is set up for the future in order to quantify the readiness of health systems across five continents to meet future healthcare challenges," said Jasper Westerink, chief executive officer of Philips Africa. "The FHI has uncovered a number of significant areas where our healthcare system must transform if we are going to succeed in delivering long-term value-based care. With these findings as a guiding light, we are engaging all relevant parties around the table to drive the debate and ultimately improve the quality and cost effectiveness of healthcare for future generations."

Where there are distinct gaps between reality and perception, it is harder to design a clear plan for future development, as both the reality and perception need to be addressed in order to advance. There is a call for greater integration globally, as the study clearly reveals that the largest perception/reality gap globally is centred on health systems integration, which also aligns to local findings.

“The general population often have a perception that healthcare is integrated and people only find that the integration is not there once they are a patient in the system,” said Westerink.

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