

# Fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic has been far reaching, report shows

The Rural Health Advocacy Project has released a new report driving home the degree to which many programmes in this sector have had gains compromised due to the health-system disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Source: [Rxabay](#)

The report released today, on Universal Health Coverage Day, also highlighted various inequities in the current structure of the health system.

Titled [Health System Strengthening Post-Covid-19](#), the report highlights the profound effect that the response to Covid-19 had on other essential health services, particularly those in primary healthcare.

These include negative effects on HIV and TB testing, as well as on tests used to help manage diabetes and cholesterol. There were stock-outs of many vital medications due to lockdowns, and childhood immunisations declined in the majority of South African provinces.

The effects on both the health of the population and the health system as a result of these disruptions could be felt for years to come.

## Building health-system resilience

The report also highlights the many innovations that came out of this health crisis that can be used to improve health system resilience going forward.

The research conducted included a literature review and data analysis. The period used for the analysis of Covid-19 data for the study is 1 March 2020 to 25 June 2022. The study focuses on three areas – diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccinations.

Each area focuses on what was required from the South African health system in order to meet the demands of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was an unprecedented health crisis in our times.

The report enables us to review this response and garner lessons that will allow us to strengthen our health system. To this end, the report includes a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve service delivery and to ensure that we are better prepared for any future pandemics.



The Covid storm may be over, but its impact on the global healthcare sector will be felt for years to come

Katja Hamilton 16 Nov 2022



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These recommendations align with the World Health Organization (WHO) health system building blocks and include improving: governance, data systems, communication with the public, the health workforce, procurement of medical products and technologies, service delivery and access to healthcare.

Russell Rensburg, Rural Health Advocacy Project director said: “The right to access health care is enshrined in our constitution, and the National Health Act entitles everyone access to free primary health care.

“The report demonstrates, despite many successful collaborations, the response to Covid was inequitable and the burden of the pandemic was disproportionately borne by the poor.

“As we begin to rebuild our health system, we have an important opportunity to strengthen primary care with a particular focus on diagnostic availability, more proactive vaccine roll-outs, and improved governance that puts the community most affected at the centre of the response rather than as subjects of a response.”

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