

Digital Health Information Systems (HIS) Project

Core business

1. Providing HIS management and support in health districts
2. Training staff at facility, district and provincial level
3. Generating information for planning, monitoring, evaluation and decision-making

In 2024, HST's Health Information Technology (HIT) Project team celebrates nine years of providing support to the National Department of Health (NDoH) to ensure the sustainability of South Africa's health information systems (HIS). The HIT team members have successfully implemented the Health Patient Registration System (HPRS) in 3 215 public health facilities across eight provinces and 46 districts (excluding the Western Cape) since 2015.

The HIS project operates along two branches, each having a different funding stream and objectives. In one branch, our HIT Technicians are sub-contracted to Health Information Systems Program South Africa (HISP-SA) to support the roll-out of HPRS installations and end-user training at hospitals, and of desktop access to the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) system at clinics.

In the other branch, HST is sub-contracted to Right to Care through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This work has entailed continued review of South Africa's health information systems (HIS) – namely the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS), the Three Interlinked Electronic Registers for TB and HIV reporting (TIER.Net), the NHLS system, and ongoing support of the HPRS.



HST HIT team members at work at earmarked facilities in provinces

Tiered HIS support for improved health care

Supporting the HPRS is a critical role and function of our qualified HIT team in the field, who follow a tiered support approach: Tier 1 involves dealing with some access control and connectivity aspects and resolving minor problems; Tier 2 involves facilitating all technical and access control aspects when required.

PEPFAR-funded District Support Partners (DSPs) assist with Tier 1 activities in 30 districts. Through collaboration with the other DSPs allocated to the various districts, HST's Provincial Team Leads oversee this work to ensure the sustainability of the HPRS at facilities, and assist the National and Provincial DoH in planning and operational effectiveness. These efforts are closely monitored by HST's Project and Technical Managers.

Training and reporting

HST provided training to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health personnel in eThekweni, Zululand, uMgungundlovu and uThukela. These in-person and virtual sessions, held in the last quarter of 2023 and in February 2024, resulted in standardised reporting on established platforms and toolkits.

Implementation of the NHLS-HPRS project continues through supporting facilities as Contracting Units for Primary Healthcare Services (CUPS) so that they are geared for National Health Insurance (NHI) applications.

Utilising the HST-developed reporting tool for analysing and evaluating data from health information systems, both of the HIS Project teams share related information with the NDoH. Currently, these data sets are imported monthly into the National Health Information Centre, thereby supporting data availability, which is essential for decision-making by all key stakeholders.

The two HIS project teams collectively contribute to strengthening governance structures, creating robust integrated platforms for the development of information systems, the use of a common unique identifier for patients at various levels of the health system, and enhancing access for healthcare users through NDoH-approved mobile platforms.

HST's preparation and implementation of these systems forms the basis for roll-out to other health establishments. The project team's reputation for delivering support of the highest standard has led to the NDoH identifying HST as the preferred implementation and support partner for progressing South Africa's NHI journey.



HST's District Support teams and KZN Department of Health staff