

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES, REGULATIONS & COORDINATION

PAKISTAN HEALTH KNOWLEDGE HUB

Success Stories

National Health Vision 2016-2025

“To improve the health of all Pakistanis, particularly women and children by providing universal access to affordable, quality, essential health services which are delivered through a resilient and responsive health system, capable of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfilling its other global health responsibilities”

National Health Vision 2016-2025

The WHO defines health policy as decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific health care goals within a society. An explicit health policy can achieve several things: it defines a vision for the future which in turn helps to establish targets and points of reference for the short and medium term.

Pakistan’s history with developing a health policy has been bumpy. From 1947 to 1990 there was no health policy in Pakistan. The first policy was developed in 1990 and focused on school health, family planning malaria control, communicable diseases as well as focus on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). This policy was followed up by the 2nd National Health Policy in 1997 which also focused on health promotion and education and prioritized national health programmes. The 3rd iteration of the Health Policy took up the “Health for All” approach and focused on a ten-point agenda for health sector reforms and resolving Primary Health Care level issues. The final policy developed by the Federal Health Ministry was drafted in 2009 and was built on the 6 building blocks of the health system. However, in the context of the then impending devolution this policy remained a draft.

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution resulted in the subject of health being devolved to the provinces. The provinces proceeded to develop their costed Provincial Health Strategies in 2011/2012, which were tailored to their respective needs. However, some residual health functions remained in the Federal Legislative Lists II & II and led to the formation of the M/oNHSRC. This Ministry has since worked to develop shared aspirations for better health in the country, while also aligning the country’s health system and targets with Pakistan’s international commitments.

The development of the National Health Vision (NHV) 2016-2025 has been a key achievement of this Ministry. The need for an NHV stemmed from a lack of a national vision that reflects the shared aspirations of the population and brings policy in line with the requirements of Pakistan’s international



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commitments i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This need was articulated in a series of meeting in 2015 between federal and provincial governments. Subsequently, a high level Inter-Ministerial forum for Health was established and roundtable meetings were held with representation from health sector, line ministries and departments, autonomous institutions, private sector, civil society, NGOs, academicians and development partners.

The resulting NHV is a consensus-based document which offers a unified vision to improve health while ensuring provincial autonomy and diversity. It allows coherence to provincial and national health planning and offers a comprehensive mechanism to align Pakistan's targets with the internationally committed agendas (such as International Health Regulations, Sustainable Development Goals and FP2020). Hence, this document represents an excellent example of coordination and consensus building in the devolved setup, which may subsequently offer a framework for future collaboration in the country.

