



Goal 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages

As a welfare State, Mauritius has invested massively in the mental and physical wellbeing of its citizens and provides free health care services for all. Today, the total health expenditure in Mauritius represents 5.83% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)¹, one of the biggest chunks of Government expenditure.

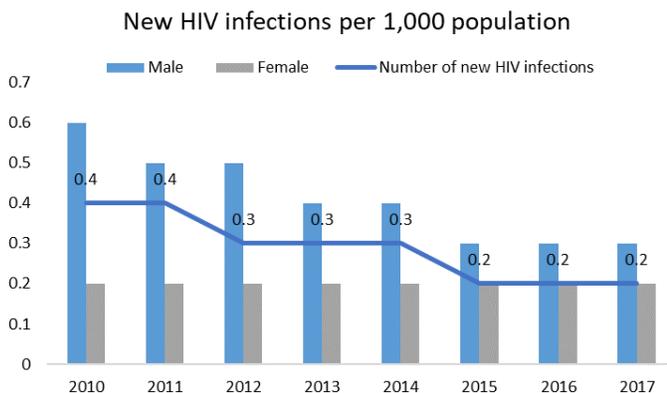
The health care sector in Mauritius is a **dual one**, with approximately 73% of the services provided by the public sector and the remaining catered by the private sector. Through the public sector, Government provides free primary, secondary and specialised medical care to all citizens and free primary health care to all foreigners. Free drugs are dispensed at the Pharmacies of hospitals. The services offered by the private sector are payable.

Over the past ten years, expenditure on health incurred by Government increased by 202%, from Rs. 3.9 billion for the financial years 2006/2007 to Rs. 12.26 billion for the financial years 2018/2019

BRIGHT SPOTS

Integrated and Multi-sector HIV/AIDS Programme

HIV/AIDS prevalence estimated at 0.80% in 2015 and remained under control and below 1% during 2016 and 2017. The percentage of pregnant women who were HIV positive receiving antiretroviral treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission **has improved from 68% in 2009 to 96.3% in 2017** with the prevalence of HIV among pregnant women remaining under 1%.



Some 368 new cases of HIV/AIDS were reported in 2017 compared to 921 cases in 2005 and 568 cases in 2010.

Around 3,693 people living with HIV and AIDS are receiving anti-retroviral therapy and 4,800 were enrolled for treatment and care with the health services at a cost of around Rs 340 million (about USD 3.4 million) annually.

Commitment of the Hon. Prime Minister in HIV/AIDS Actions



Government has taken the commitment at the highest level to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. In January 2019, the Hon. Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius chaired the First High Level Drugs and HIV Council's First Meeting. The Government is working in close collaboration with private sector and NGOs. The aim of the High Level Drugs and HIV Council is to promote a multisectoral approach in order to find concrete measures to minimise the impact of drugs and HIV/AIDS in the country.

Source: Government Information Service

Mauritius has a comprehensive anti HIV/AIDS action plan in place. 8 Day Care centers for the Immuno-suppressed provide services to People Living with HIV. An updated HIV/AIDS Treatment protocol has also been elaborated to follow-up patients under anti-retro-viral (ARV) drugs. HIV/AIDS awareness programmes are also conducted at national level. To-date some 20,839 students were sensitized across Mauritius. The Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST) programme in Mauritius is being given serious consideration as an HIV prevention measure.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Government is committed to improving the quality of life of all individuals, in particular girls and women. Free maternal health care, including prenatal care services are provided by qualified health personnel through a network of primary health care institutions. The maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births is 74. Almost all deliveries (98.8 per cent) are carried out in either public or private hospitals by qualified and skilled personnel.

One of the main non-communicable diseases affecting women is Cancer. In this context, Government came up with national screening and early detection programmes for cervical (Pap smears) and breast cancer, (clinical palpation and diagnostic mammography) for married/ sexually active women aged 30 to 60 years.

Moreover, Mobile Clinic Service (Caravane de Santé) enhances the health status of the population through a wider range of health intervention activities. The service is geared towards providing health services to the community at their doorsteps, at schools and at workplaces. In the year 2016, some 8,050 women were screened for breast and cervical cancer.



Mobile Clinic Service

The screening services are offered to primary health care attendees in the mediclinics and area health centres for effective and early detection of diseases. Clinically suspicious lesions are referred for further management at secondary levels.

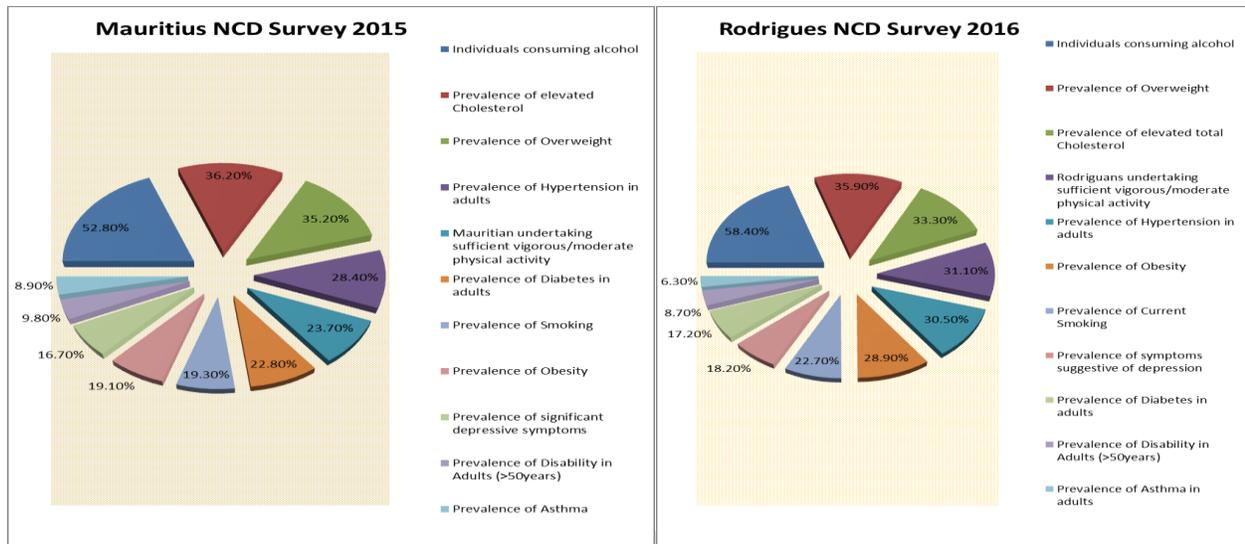
In 2016, Government introduced Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination in its Expanded Programme of Immunisation. This vaccination guards girls against the four strands of HPV most associated with cervical cancer. Some 24, 804 doses were administered to girls in 2017.

Mammogram facilities are available free of charge in the regional hospitals.

There are also awareness campaigns to sensitise the public about cancer and its symptoms. These campaigns also aim at promoting early detection at community level and counselling.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

The high prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) namely due to alcohol, overweight, cholesterol, lack of physical activity, obesity, smoking, depression, diabetes, is a major handicap to the Republic of Mauritius. The graphs below provide a breakdown of NCD in Mauritius and Rodrigues.



Mauritius is no longer among the first 10 countries in the world with a high prevalence of diabetes.

The Government of Mauritius has implemented strategies, such as, the promotion of appropriate diets and healthy lifestyles, construction of health tracks, sensitization campaigns, amongst others in order to reduce NCDs in Mauritius.



The Sodnac Wellness Park is one of the fitness tracks constructed by Government to promote good health and well-being.

Sodnac Wellness Park

Smoking



Pictorial Warning on Cigarette Packets in Mauritius

As a party to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), Mauritius has implemented some of the strongest and most progressive tobacco policies in Africa and emerged as one of the leaders in tobacco control in the region.

In 2009, Mauritius became the country in Africa to implement pictorial warnings on cigarette packages.

Mauritius was also the first country in Africa to adopt a comprehensive smoke free law and the first country in the world to ban smoking in vehicles carrying passengers.

Overseas Treatment Funded by Government

Under the Overseas Treatment Scheme (OTS), the Government of Mauritius helps to ease the financial burden on those who cannot afford medical treatment abroad. The OTS gives priority to patients from low income groups whose household monthly income (couple only) does not exceed Rs 50,000 to benefit from financial assistance for treatment not available locally. In 2017, a total number of 199 complicated cases, which cannot be attended locally, were referred abroad for treatment.

Collaboration with the Private Sector: Medical Tourism Hub

The Government supports the expansion of the medical tourism sector and is aspiring to become a medical tourism hub for the Indian Ocean region. In order to promote the medical sector as a prime pillar of the economy, Government is partnering with the private sector. State-of-art services are provided by private clinics so as to reach world class standards in all medical establishments.

In 2016, Mauritius attracted more than 16,000 foreign patients (up from 1,000 in 2005 and 12,000 in 2012) for treatment in speciality areas including cardiology, fertility treatment and orthopaedics.

The Apollo Bramwell Hospital is an example of how the private sector is contributing in the development of proper health facilities in Mauritius.



Apollo Bramwell Hospital, Mauritius

Credits: Google photos

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges	Opportunities
<p>1. Cancer Some 2,607 new cases of cancer were registered by the National Cancer Register of Mauritius in 2016 as compared to 1,400 in 2009.</p>	<p>Increasing awareness campaigns to sensitise the public about cancer and its symptoms. These campaigns also aim at promoting early detection at community level and counselling.</p> <p>This helps to promote a proper lifestyle among all citizens in terms of practice of physical exercise, healthy eating, adopt greener/organic agricultural practices, reduce alcohol and tobacco, less use of chemicals and avoid overuse of pesticides.</p>
<p>2. Ageing Population Mauritius has a low fertility rate and an ageing population. In 2016, the total fertility rate was 1.4, well below replacement level of 2.1 children per couple.</p>	<p>With the aim of 'leaving no one behind', Government provides preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative services to elderly people and the disabled. There are monthly domiciliary visits by Medical Officers to assess the state of health of those who are bedridden, persons above 75 years and all elderly persons above 90 years.</p> <p>Mauritius can invest more in medical officers, specialised in working with the elderly. In light of developing Mauritius as a medical hub, Mauritius can then export this service to the Indian Ocean region and beyond.</p>
<p>3. High Number of Patients for Primary Health Care</p> <p>Primary healthcare is the first level of contact of individuals, the family and the community with the national health system. The outpatient and accident and emergency departments of hospitals remain overcrowded. In 2017, all hospitals including the specialized ones had to manage around 60% of all outpatient cases seen by doctor in public health institutions.</p>	<p>Mauritius intends to re-orientate the model of care at the primary level by implementing the Family Doctor Scheme (FDS) in Mauritius. The dimensions of the Family Doctor Service will be effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, client's satisfaction and quality care.</p> <p>The upcoming implementation of e-Health system for Mauritius as from June 2019 should also include a quick win strategy aiming at providing efficiency gains.</p>
<p>4. Issues on the registration of foreign medical professionals in Mauritius and the acceptable list of registered universities.</p>	<p>A review of legislation to promote access foreign medical professionals to exercise in Mauritius should be encouraged.</p>