



Policy recommendations to improve access to diabetes care in South Africa

In 2015, there were 2.3 million adults with diabetes in South Africa, 1.4 million of whom were not diagnosed. More than 57,000 people died in the country that year due to diabetes-related complications. Many of these deaths could have been prevented with better access to care.

To stem the advance of the diabetes epidemic in the country, IDF, SEMDSA and Diabetes South Africa request that the South African government adopt and fully implement a national Diabetes Plan covering the following:

Financing

- Promotes the allocation of an increased budget dedicated to fund all aspects of diabetes care, in accordance with its commitment to prevent non-communicable diseases
- Provides a system for a better coordination with the Council of Medical Schemes (CMS), the organization in charge of reimbursement, to limit the out-of-pocket payments and prevent households from incurring in catastrophic expenditures

Service delivery

- Dedicates part of this budget to improve diabetes early prevention and intervention. This includes working with civil society groups to promote healthy lifestyles, including healthy food and the limitation of marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to all the population, especially children

Information systems

- Implements a monitoring and surveillance framework to improve early diagnosis of diabetes

Medicines and technology

- Improves the access to appropriate cost-effective essential diabetes medicines, insulin pens and needles, and monitoring devices and strips in public health facilities
- Improves the government provision of affordable innovative medicines and technologies that can improve the health outcomes of people with diabetes

Health workforce

- Invests in ample provision of training for endocrinologist, which will lead to improved access to diabetes care in the future
- Ensures that all healthcare professionals are trained adequately on evidence-based principles in the early identification and management of diabetes, so that all South Africans have access to high-quality care
- Invests in the provision of training of Nurses in Diabetes Management
- Recognizes Diabetes Education by a Professional Nurse as a Speciality by the South African Nursing Council
- Establishes an interdisciplinary team in the districts for comprehensive diabetes care

WHO framework on Integrated people-centred health services

- Includes formal Diabetes Education as part of the management plan for people living with Diabetes
- Empowers patients by promoting and implementing diabetes education that will ultimately lead to the development of skills that ensure adequate diabetes self-management.
- Diabetes Awareness, education and support have to be included in the Government's Annual Budget, including the production of relevant literature appropriate for a semi-literate population and available in English, as well as in the other official languages in the country



The policy recommendations in this document are based on information extracted from:

- The IDF Blue Circle Voices network's first consultation;
- The IDF Access to Medicines report, which has been developed with the input of 80 IDF Members from around the world;
- Feedback from IDF's national Members.