

Africa Health 2024 relocates to Cape Town, spotlighting healthcare financing

The annual Africa Health congress has become a dynamic hub for healthcare innovation and thought leadership across the continent.



Source: [Rxabay](#)

Now, in a significant shift, Africa Health 2024 is set to be hosted in Cape Town, following previous years' events in Johannesburg. This marks the first time the conference will be held in the Mother City.

Known for its rich history and cultural diversity, Cape Town also boasts a vibrant medical and scientific community and is one of the continent's hotbeds for medical and technological innovation.

"Cape Town's robust healthcare infrastructure and focus on medical advancement and quality of care are aligned with Africa Health's overarching vision, making it a fitting location for the continent's largest healthcare gathering.

"The move is anticipated to bring new perspectives and reinvigorate the ongoing dialogues central to improving healthcare across the continent," says Tom Coleman, the exhibition director for Africa Health Congress.

Historically, the congress has served as a key forum for wide-ranging discussions across the healthcare ecosystem, including technological innovations, policy, and financing. The upcoming Cape Town event continues this tradition, aiming

to bring together diverse healthcare professionals to address the sector's pressing challenges.

Last year's Africa Health event saw the African healthcare industry converge in Johannesburg for three days of networking, education, and business opportunities.

The event attracted more than 8,100 attendees hailing from some 40 different nations, as well as more than 400 exhibitors.

"Building on that success, this year's event in Cape Town is expected to draw significant numbers of industry leaders, policymakers, health-system specialists, and other health experts with a vision to align on the current critical issues in African healthcare," says Coleman.

Acknowledging the geopolitical landscape, with 16 African nations heading towards elections this year, the healthcare sector faces a pivotal period. This context frames South Africa's recent 2024 Budget Speech, where Minister Enoch Godongwana's allocation of additional funds for nursing, healthcare workers and skills training spoke to a continent-wide necessity.

A central theme at Africa Health 2024 will be the ongoing evolution of healthcare financing models, exemplified by South Africa's National Health Insurance (NHI), which was allocated R1.4bn during the Budget Speech. Last year, debates across the country focused on the development of this model, which culminated in the NHI bill's approval by the National Council of Provinces.

"Although still a hotly contested issue, this year, the emphasis is expected to shift towards practical implementation challenges. The topic is expected to feature prominently at this year's Congress, especially within the public health; quality management & patient safety; and ethics, human rights & medical-law conference tracks," says Coleman.

Advancing healthcare in Africa

A significant focus this year within the broader sector will be on developing standardised, ethical, and interoperable health information systems across Africa – a cornerstone for improving patient care and data management.

Last year's rapid advancements in AI in healthcare were evinced at the international Innov8 start-up competition at the 2023 event, where artificial general intelligence trailblazers, Robotscanthink, and AI-powered laboratory information management system innovators VitruvianMD, were awarded second and third place prizes respectively.

Building on that emphasis, the 2024 congress anticipates discussions on its increasing role in areas like imaging,

diagnostics, and clinical coding, exploring how these advancements are helping us evolve healthcare practices on the continent.



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Another critical agenda item is the impact of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), a leading cause of death globally, and a massive burden on both healthcare systems and national economies. This year's congress will examine NCDs from various perspectives, considering their escalating significance.

Last year's Inaugural Healthcare Indaba set the tone for an optimistic outlook from leaders at the highest echelons in the healthcare space. Building on this momentum, the second Africa Health Indaba this year is poised to further these discussions, emphasising innovation and strategic collaboration in the face of the continent's evolving healthcare challenges.

Networking opportunities

Following on from the vibrant networking and deal-sealing at last year's event, the Hosted Buyers initiative, a programme aimed at connecting exhibitors and potential buyers, will be a key part of this year's Cape Town conference.

Additionally, Medlab Africa 2024 will be held concurrently with Africa Health, offering further insights into laboratory medicine. Medlab Africa provides a platform to showcase the entire spectrum of products, technology and innovations emerging from the field of laboratory medicine – an increasingly important component of our continent's healthcare systems.

"The conference aspires to be a nexus for knowledge exchange and idea exploration, with in-depth explorations of the issues shaping African healthcare's future. It offers a platform for professional networking, learning from thought leaders, and engaging with healthcare innovation," says Coleman.

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