



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



Thanks to strong government leadership and support from WHO and other partners, Laos' steady progress on national health indicators and health system strengthening is leading the country towards its strong commitment to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2025.



HEALTH SECTOR REFORM STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK TILL 2025, 2013-2025

6 758 353 TOTAL POPULATION, (2016)	66 YEARS LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH, (2015)	98\$ TOTAL HEALTH EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA, (2014)	42% TUBERCULOSIS TREATMENT COVERAGE, (2016)
39% OUT OF POCKET EXPENDITURE AS % OF TOTAL HEALTH EXPENDITURE, (2014)	3% GENERAL GOVERNMENT HEALTH EXPENDITURE AS % OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE, (2014)	32% EXTERNAL AID AS % OF TOTAL HEALTH EXPENDITURE, (2014)	37% ANTENATAL CARE COVERAGE, (2011-2012)
7 HOSPITAL BEDS PER 10 000 POPULATION, (2010)	56% RURAL POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES, (2015)	82% DTP3 IMMUNIZATION COVERAGE AMONG 1-YEAR-OLDS, (2016)	40% BIRTHS ATTENDED BY SKILLED HEALTH PERSONNEL, (2011)

CURRENT PRIORITIES

The national health indicators of the Lao PDR have improved over recent decades and significant progress has been made in strengthening the country's health system. A policy of decentralization of health services to the provincial, district and health centre levels has been underway since the 1990s. Since then, a number of national policy and strategy documents have been formulated to address key health issues. Key policies include the Primary Health Care Policy (2000); the National Strategy on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (2016-2025) and the National Strategy for Human Resources for Health (2010-2020).

Lao's 8th Five Year Health Sector Development Plan 2016-2020 has a strong commitment to speeding up health reforms and promoting service delivery for all within a more equitable health system by addressing cultural, financial and geographical barriers encountered by vulnerable groups.

LINKAGE TO UHC

Laos' National Health Sector Reform Strategy 2013-2025, building on the foundation of primary health care, has committed the country to achieving universal health coverage by 2025. In line with this goal, Lao's draft Road Map for the UHC Partnership includes a strong focus on human resources for health and health financing which are seen as key to ensuring the delivery of quality health services and to support and bolster ongoing UHC efforts.

The 2017 annual funding plan continues to support the Ministry of Health in agreed technical areas of the 8th Health Sector Development Plan such as immunisation, communicable diseases surveillance and response, maternal and child health, as well as strengthening the health system.

WHO SUPPORT TO DATE

- Reviewed and updated Health Personnel Development Strategy 2010-2020 with development of 5-year action plan 2016–2020 to support a fit for purpose health workforce
- Supported capacity building for M&E of health policies including development of a UHC M&E framework and dashboard
- Advocacy, awareness & training on Financial Management Guidelines and Aid Effectiveness Guidelines for use by Development Partners
- Developed health service delivery packages in alignment with required equipment and infrastructure at each facility level to strengthen delivery of quality services

Remaining gap: Improve rural availability of quality services

↳ **Recommendation: strengthen evidence based, integrated planning & delivery of services.**

Remaining gap: Variable performance of the health sector

↳ **Recommendation : Improve governance and efficient management of health sector reforms.**

Remaining gap: Health workforce lacking key competencies

↳ **Recommendation : support health profession education reform and strengthen workforce regulatory system.**

Stories from the field:

Lao hosts International Symposium on UHC



To advance international policy debate on UHC, the Ministry of Health organised an International Symposium in June 2016, co-hosted by Nagoya University, Japan. At the core of the agenda was Health Systems Strengthening and Sustainable Financing, with a focus on three fundamental and interlinked aspects of UHC:

1. Population coverage
2. Quality service delivery including skilled human resources
3. Financial Protection

Participants noted the need to balance depth of coverage with financial protection and improved service delivery. If services are not available, accessible or appropriate, then people are not able to benefit from them even if entitled. Delivering closing remarks, WHO Representative Dr Juliet Fleischl said: *“UHC does not only mean financial protection but equitable access to comprehensive essential quality health services. The achievement and sustainability of UHC depends more on the committed spirit of the health workers, the ownership by the people, and good governance systems.”*



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