

Sixth Pillar: Health

Overview of Current Situation

Human health is one of the main pillars of a strong society and an inherent human right. An individual of sound health has the ability to work and produce, benefiting society and consequently the state's economy. Any state's decision-makers must give the health pillar great importance, as it is an issue that directly impacts citizens and directly affects human and economic development, especially since the citizen represents the state's human capital.

The formulation of the Strategic Vision for the Health Sector should take into account all issues that impact, or are affected by citizens' health, whether these issues fall under the scope of the Ministry of Health and Population or other ministries such as the Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Utilities and Urban Communities, Ministry of Supply, Ministry of Environment, and others.

The 2014 Constitution affirmed the universal right to healthcare, where Article 18 states that each citizen has the right to enjoy a healthy life and to receive comprehensive healthcare in line with quality standards. The Constitution also says that the State shall allocate a percentage of GDP on health equal to not less than 3%, a value that represents almost twice the current governmental expenditure on the health sector, a step that reflects the growing awareness of society and policy makers to the importance of this issue during the coming phase. This echoes both Goals 3 and 6 of the United Nations SDGs, which tackle Good Health and Well-being and Sanitation respectively, as well as other goals that have an indirect correlation to the state of a society's health.

The healthcare system should tackle the positive and negative factors or determinants affecting citizens' health, including (1) the general climate and context, consisting of economic, social, cultural, and environmental conditions; (2) living and working conditions linked to national policies and strategies that include aspects such as access to high-quality health services, clean potable water, and good sanitation; (3) community conditions influencing health; (4) individual lifestyles including aspects such as personal hygiene; and finally (5) characteristics that determine an individual's condition such as age, sex, and genetic factors.

The healthcare situation in Egypt can be analyzed at three levels: public health indicators, healthcare (accessibility and quality of services), and health sector management. The Ministry of Health and Population has taken many positive steps towards improving the health of the citizens, a matter that is reflected in the improvement of some health indicators such as the reduction in maternal and child mortality rates, which are now in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular, the Fourth and Fifth Goals.

Despite the enhancement of some areas in the **public health category**, there are still many negative issues requiring action, in particular the diseases affecting citizens and existing causes of death. For instance, Egypt has one of the highest incidences of Hepatitis C, where more than 10% of the Egyptian people are carriers of the hepatitis C virus (HCV) carriers.¹ The medical treatment of such a staggering figure requires serious steps towards the reform of the entire

¹ White paper, outlining the health policy in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Ministry of Health and Population.