

Cape Town's Urban Health Programme: A resilient response to global health challenges

The Urban Health Programme and Monitoring Initiative, announced during the Partnership for Healthy Cities summit, aims to inform relevant policies, programmes and projects going forward, and so positively influence health outcomes for communities.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The integrated initiative is embedded in the City's Integrated Development Plan, as part of its Resilient City Foundation.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the links between health, equity and poverty – and signalled a need for the City to bolster its capacity to monitor and improve urban health over time. Inspiration also came from Cape Town's involvement in the Partnership for Healthy Cities – supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the World Health Organization and Vital Strategies.

The partnership is a global network of 73 cities, including Cape Town, working together and sharing information to help protect their collective populations of more than 300 million people from preventable deaths and injuries, using proven interventions.

The City is a co-host for the partnership's annual summit, with more than 150 delegates gathered in Cape Town this week.

With the majority of the world's population now living in urban settings - cities and their leaders are well positioned to transform the fight against non-communicable diseases and injuries, and reduce preventable deaths by implementing policies that are proven to prevent exposure to risk factors.

Prioritising socio-economic determinants

The City's Urban Health Programme aims to prioritise socio-economic determinants of health specific to Cape Town, and to provide crucial insights for all departments on how they can help address the determinants of health, whether through planning and design of infrastructure, provision of services and job creation.

"This is a marathon and not a sprint, and hopefully it will be the blueprint for the metropole into the future. Cape Town has a very high burden of non-communicable diseases, and other preventable deaths.

"And, while we have a good understanding of the various factors that contribute to that burden, this programme will provide crucial information that can help determine strategies going forward. Metropolitan areas are growing, and Cape Town is no different.

"So it is imperative that our future planning takes place through a public health lens," said mayoral committee member for community services and health, councillor Patricia Van der Ross.

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