



“PRIORITIES OF HEALTH ECONOMICS IN AFRICA”

Inaugural Conference of the African Health Economics and Policy Association (AfHEA)
10th – 12th March 2009 - Accra, Ghana

Plenary session 3: The business case for private investment in Africa's health sector

This session will present the IFC's new Health in Africa (HiA) strategy to invest in Africa's private health sector and provide a forum for discussing opportunities for a better engagement of the private health sector in achieving broader health goals.

Speakers

- Scott Featherston, Team Leader for the Health in Africa (HiA), IFC
- Alexander S. Preker, Head Health Investment Policy (CICIG), World Bank Group

Panelists:

- Max Lawson, Senior Policy Adviser at Oxfam, Oxfam (London, UK)
- Onno Schellekens, Managing Director, PharmAccess (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
- Anne Rooney, Vice President, Joint Commission International (JCI) (Chicago, IL)
- Stefan Nachuk, Associate Director from the Rockefeller Foundation, (New York, NY)
- Gina Lagomarsino, Managing Director, Results for Development (Washington, DC)

Background

As described in a recent report on The Business of Health in Africa released by the IFC (www.ifc.org/healthinafrica), the private sector is already a significant contributor to the health system – often providing the only option in rural regions and poor urban slums. Private providers (for-profit and not-for-profit) serve all income levels and have broad geographic reach. As African health expenditure will keep growing rapidly, with the private sector playing a key role, the private sector must work with the public sector to develop viable, sustainable, and equitable health care systems. But it can help expand access to services for the poorest people and reduce the financial burden on governments. But there are a number of impediments to the health sector today including limited access to capital, burdensome regulations, shortages of skilled workers, and a lack of risk-pooling mechanisms that can mobilize revenues for providers.

Presentations

The Business of Health in Africa, the IFC's Health in Africa Strategy

The World Bank's Health, Nutrition, and Population strategy emphasizes working with countries (governments, the private sector, and civil society) and international partners to achieve results on the ground including health-related Millennium

Development Goals (“MDGs”) and strengthening health systems, financing, and economics. Within this strategic framework, the IFC with the assistance of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and McKinsey formulated a Health in Africa (HiA) initiative to: (i) step up its engagement and support of Africa’s private health sector; (ii) to contribute to the implementation of the HNP strategy; and (iii) complement the work of other parts of the World Bank Group that support health services. This presentation will discuss the findings of the joint IFC-McKinsey report and the details of the resulting IFC strategy to invest in Africa’s private health sector.

Scott Featherston and Alexander S. Preker will present the main IFC strategy for better engagement of the private sector, followed by a Panel Discussion by Max, Lawson, Onno Schellekens, Anne Rooney, Stefan Nachuk, Lagomarsino on the challenges of engaging the private sector and importance of addressing quality, equity, efficiency and affordability issues. The session will provide an opportunity to discuss both the opportunities and risks associated with the new IFC strategy and work by other organizations working actively in this area: Oxfam, PharmAccess, the Joint Commission International, the Rockefeller Foundation and Results for Development.