HEALTH IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A Focused Approach to Address the Health Needs of ADB Developing Member Countries
We are also launching a plan for delivering the health care solutions Asia and the Pacific needs, the ADB Operational Plan for Health (OPH), 2015–2020. The plan for health offers new and innovative ways to strengthen existing programs and implement new ones; ensure health care quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and foster collaboration with ADB developing member countries (DMCs) and development partners to build responsive health systems that create the foundation for UHC.

Doubling the Size of Our Health Care Funding

Good health is essential for individual well-being. It helps ensure learning, productivity, income, and happiness. It is at the core of sustainable development and national and regional prosperity. All countries face challenges providing and financing health care. And while the countries of Asia and the Pacific are making efforts toward achieving universal health care (UHC)—quality health services for all without undue financial hardship—critical issues remain. Escalating health care costs, pandemics, and a rising incidence of non-communicable disease create a host of problems. Aging societies, changing lifestyles, population mobility, urbanization and widening economic inequities together with vulnerabilities caused by natural disasters and climate change also contribute to making the region’s public health challenges ever more complex. Further complicating things is a more prosperous citizenry demanding better health care solutions.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) understands the need to meet these issues head on. Investments in human resources, capacity development, infrastructure, medical goods, reforms, and technology are required. For this we are expanding ADB health sector investments from the current 1%–2% to 3%–5% of our total portfolio. It is part of our plan to help meet the United Nations post-2015 sustainable development goal of UHC by the year 2030.

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Taking a New Direction in Health Care Development

ADB’s new plan for health responds to recommendations from the Midterm Review (MTR) of ADB’s Strategy 2020. The MTR called for doubling funding to health sector grants and loans for greater support for our DMCs in meeting the post-2015 goal of expanding public and private health services. Improvements in health care access for vulnerable groups, optimization of health outcomes by leveraging ADB infrastructure projects, and additional support to health sector regional public goods were also recommended. The OPH puts these recommendations into action.

But this is only part of the story. The other is the new direction the OPH takes to steer the region toward outcome-driven practices and away from output-based business as usual. To do this the OPH advances innovative, evidence-based approaches for building and managing health services in the long term. It supports partnering with DMCs to create responsive health systems that promote inclusion and good use of public and private resources. And it fosters investments in integrated and cost-effective programs that expand the supply of public and private health services and offer financing to create health-services demand.

Guided by the OPH, UHC initiatives will build on our key strengths and be linked to the broader social protection strategy of ADB. These initiatives will form a basis for partnerships with health sector cofinanciers and technical agencies, and be synergized through support for regional cooperation and integration.

Moreover, modalities that promote public–private partnerships and lead to larger lending amounts and reduced transaction costs will be explored. And 100% of ADB health sector projects will mainstream gender to take advantage of the role women play as a health care driver and ensure female health status increases in both rural and urban settings.
To ensure DMC needs are met, our operational focus will build on ADB experience and strengths, with financing and knowledge solutions tailored to development status—whether middle-income or low-income country.

Increasing the reach of health care through infrastructure. ADB will invest directly in health service infrastructure for health facilities and hospitals, ensuring that infrastructure is integrated into health systems, managed and staffed efficiently, and properly operated with sustainable financing. Taking a holistic approach, ADB will invest in human resources and technology and in strengthening the supply of quality pharmaceuticals and medical products. Investments in information and communication technology (ICT) systems will underpin health projects. Analytics will support development of integrated urban health models. Private sector approaches will be introduced to address standards, efficiency, and financing. ADB will also optimize indirect public-health outcomes by broadening collaboration between health and infrastructure sectors such as transport road safety, energy, urban development, and water and sanitation.

Advancing health care through governance and regional public goods. ADB will provide financing and technical assistance to strengthen institutions, planning, financial management, and health information and regulatory systems. All will be backed by ICT solutions to assure quality, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability. Our investments will strengthen the accreditation of hospitals, licensing of health workers and facilities, and regulatory processes for pharmaceuticals and medical goods. And technical support will improve the legal and regulatory environment for private sector engagement and public-private partnerships. Support will also continue to build and institutionalize capacity to manage regional public goods. Here, regional coordination mechanisms will also be introduced to improve health sector governance and strengthen cross-border action, cooperation, and policy dialogue.

Expanding health care through innovative financing. ADB will support allocative and technical efficiency, such as increased spending on primary care in underserved areas as well as financial incentives for adherence to diagnostic and treatment guidelines. Also supported will be health financing reforms to move from inefficient, input-based budget lines to efficient output-based program budgeting and government purchasing. Consolidation of risk-pooling initiatives in low-income countries and expanded coverage and financial protection of health insurance systems in middle-income countries will also be promoted. Performance incentives will be created through the reform of provider payment mechanisms. And to sustain health-financing reforms and evidence-based spending, investments in ICT solutions will be expanded or introduced.

Promoting Universal Health Care by Leveraging ADB Strengths

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Based on the needs of our DMCs and taking a broad and long-term approach, ADB will engage with governments and the private sector along four business lines:

• **Infrastructure for integrated health services delivery**—funding to not only build hospitals and clinics but also to provide expertise on how to supply them with the right human resources and ICT, ensure they have efficient equipment financing and management of auxiliary services, and integrate them into the health system through linkages to primary and secondary health care services.

• **Elderly health care for an aging region**—funding for infrastructure, insurance, services, and elder-care providers as well as for promoting governance, standards, and regulations, particularly accountability mechanisms for public and private services.

• **Information and communication technology for accountability and decision making**—funding for eHealth across health systems to track disease classifications and patient information, improve the efficiency and quality of services, and collect and analyze health data for evidence-based decision making. ICT will also be used to develop public-private-partnership and private sector investment models for infrastructure financing and payment mechanisms that modernize purchasing systems.

• **Health financing/insurance**—funding to help governments move from input-based health budgets to output-based payment, especially through public and private health insurance.

Launching Flagship Programs in Two Phases in 8–12 DMCs

Across these four business lines ADB is launching flagship programs that build on our existing health projects and decades of successful health sector operations. Rolled out in two phases, these programs:

- **Health governance**
- **health financing**
- **infrastructure**
- **Human resources**
- **management systems**
- **accountability**
- **Insurance**
- **Private sector**
- **Public budgets**

The initial health sector support efforts of ADB will focus on 8–12 interested developing member countries with existing health operations.
will provide lessons learned, support analytical work and knowledge-sharing, and achieve concrete results.

ADB Health Sector Phase 1 (2015–2018) will build on proven areas within our current health sector portfolio and include

- urban health in South Asia.
- equitable health insurance in East and Southeast Asia.
- efficient service delivery in the Pacific, and East and Southeast Asia.
- regional health security in Southeast Asia.
- integrated hospital care in East Asia.

ADB Health Sector Phase 2 (2018–2020) will broaden the range of ADB health sector projects even further to include

- elderly care in East Asia.
- eHealth in Asia and the Pacific.
- integrated hospital care in Papua New Guinea.
- delivery of private-sector financing for health service in Asia and the Pacific.

Building Health Flagship Programs on ADB’s Long-Standing Success

Urban Health Flagship Program—Generating and sharing knowledge are critical for providing access to health care solutions and innovations. Since 1998, ADB has promoted urban health in Bangladesh, where the current ADB-financed and Sida and UNFPA co-financed Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project supports innovative contracting agreements with non-government organizations (NGOs) to deliver a package of basic health services to urban poor populations. The project ensures quality health outcomes through a powerful monitoring and evaluation framework that measures NGO performance.

Knowledge and best practices from the program will be paired with regional and global best practices to underpin an ADB urban health flagship program soon to be rolled out in selected DMCs.

Social Health Insurance Flagship Program—Social health insurance is arguably the most equitable and cost-effective way to deliver UHC. Since 1994, ADB has supported the development of social health insurance in Mongolia, where ADB financing supported the policy dialogue and health sector reform programs that bolstered passage of a 2014 health insurance law. The law strengthened legal frameworks to achieve universal coverage and increase the range of benefits.

Lessons learned will spearhead a flagship program that will share the best practices for designing and implementing effective social insurance programs, government purchase of private sector health services, and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation dashboard to measure insurance-related health outcomes and health system performance.

Regional Health Security Flagship Program—Strengthening regional health security is essential to Asia’s prosperity and wellness. And ADB leadership has been at the forefront, providing solutions through regional initiatives to control communicable and emerging infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (2003), avian influenza H5N1 (2006), pandemic...
influenza H1N1 (2009), and continuing outbreaks of dengue and malaria. Building on these experiences, ADB established the Regional Malaria and other Communicable Disease Threats Trust Fund in 2013 and agreed to host the Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance Secretariat.

Leveraging knowledge from these efforts, an ADB health security flagship program will foster regional coordination, region-wide surveillance, multisector collaboration, donor harmonization, and innovative partnerships.

Efficient Service Delivery Flagship Program—Efficient service delivery is a key to achieving UHC. Through investments in health centers, laboratory services, village health workers, and health staff training, ADB supports strengthening health care delivery at the district and community levels in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, and Viet Nam.

Drawing from these initiatives, an ADB service-delivery flagship program will share best practices and lessons learned across the region to help deliver efficient and cost-effective health services. ADB solutions will promote information technology-enabled health service delivery through private and public providers, including CSOs, that responds to both centralized and decentralized health systems.

Integrated Hospital System Flagship Program—Sound health reform can provide the standards necessary for improved health care. An innovative ADB approach invested in comprehensive hospital reforms to develop Mongolia’s first hospital development policy. The policy helped turn Ulaanbaatar’s capital–district hospital into a model multifunctional general hospital—with expanded services—that other district hospitals are expected to follow. Additional initiatives springing from the policy and ADB-supported programs are enhanced postgraduate programs and medical residency training to improve human resources.

An ADB flagship program will build on the Mongolia experience to offer integrated hospital system solutions to selected DMCs.
Health is not everything, but everything is nothing without Health. Good health is the basis for a good life. It is also fundamental to the health and prosperity of nations. The right to “medical care” to ensure good health is so important it is enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

The ADB Operational Plan for Health will offer our DMCs improved health care quality and coverage, strengthened health system efficiencies, and reduced household expenditures for health care. ADB’s ultimate aim is to bring universal health care to our DMCs. And the Phase 1 and Phase 2 programs of our Operational Plan for Health will bring us closer to this goal.

Supporting Partnerships and Collaboration

The ADB Operational Plan for Health, 2015–2020 is focused and well-funded. Success will depend on maintaining strategic partnerships and alliances. ADB will work with the World Health Organization to develop monitoring frameworks with performance indicators that measure achievements toward UHC.

We will also develop and deepen alliances with multilateral and bilateral partners to strengthen programs, funds, and foundations to identify cofinancing, and centers of excellence and technical agencies to improve the health capacity of ADB and our DMCs.

Within ADB, our Health Sector Group will reach out to other ADB operational sectors. This will let us identify and monitor the contributions of non-health sectors to health outcomes and create important health-related synergies.

Bringing UHC to Asia and the Pacific Is Our Primary Goal

Learn more about ADB Health Sector Initiatives

To find out more about the ADB Operational Plan for Health, 2015–2020 as well as other ADB health care initiatives, please visit www.adb.org/sectors/health/main.

You may also contact our Health Sector Group Secretariat at healthcop_sec@adb.org.
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A Focused Approach to Address the Health Needs of ADB Developing Member Countries

The ADB Operational Plan for Health, 2015–2020 is designed to provide health care solutions that meet the specific needs of individual countries and the Asia and Pacific region as a whole. The plan leverages key ADB strengths: our extensive experience providing infrastructure and innovative financing, and our support for health governance and regional public goods. Most of all the ADB plan for health is about people—the young, the old, the poor, and the region’s growing middle class. It is about supporting universal health coverage by making urban and rural health care efficient, affordable, of good quality, and fully accessible.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB’s vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region’s many successes, it remains home to the majority of the world’s poor. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.