



HEALTH-E NEWS SERVICE

www.health-e.org.za



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Who is Health-e

Non-profit news agency set up in 1999 to improve health coverage in the media. Funded by clients and donors.

Mission

To investigate, analyse and report on public health issues in the southern African to empower people, encourage debate and hold decision makers accountable.

Three units

- Print
- Television
- OurHealth Citizen Journalist Project
- Radio (closed end 2012)



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OurHealth Citizen Journalism

Why:

- Patient advocacy: tired of seeing terrible health service delivery
- On-the-ground coverage of NHI rollout
- 'Arab Spring': power of social media to bring about change
- Job creation

Theory

'Social accountability': where formal accountability (eg elections) has failed to improve service delivery, it is possible to hold the state accountable through the media and public mobilisation.



What?

Started in September 2012 as a pilot, recruiting activists in 5 pilot NHI Districts, equipped with Samsung Galaxy Tablets.

- Tshwane (Gauteng)
- Vhembe (Limpopo)
- OR Tambo (Eastern Cape)
- Thabo Mofutsanyana (Free State)
- Umkungndlovu (KwaZulu-Natal)



In 2013, we have expanded to:

- Kenneth Kaunda, North West;
- Gert Sibande, Mpumalanga;
- Pixley ka Seme, Northern Cape and
- Eden, Western Cape

Plus 2 non-NHI districts:

Soweto + Ekurhuleni

= 20 Citizen Journalists covering places not usually in the news (Vhembe, Victoria West, Kuruman etc)

Send diaries to OurHealth manager, send stories to part-time sub-editor, stories published on website. Some sent to mainstream press.



The main aims of OurHealth are to:

- Shine a light on the health issues and challenges in some of the poorest, most marginalised areas of the country;
- Get reports directly from the people who use public health facilities every day about their experiences;
- Hold the district service-providers accountable for conditions and services at clinics and hospitals, as well as municipalities who supply services that affect health, such as water and sanitation.
- Report on inspirational people and projects that are helping to improve the health of ordinary people.



Access to medicines

Since June 2013, the CJs have been involved in an Access to Medicines campaign and clinic monitoring of medicines as part of a SADC project called Tendai. (Have DoH permission and working with 'Stop the Stockouts' campaign)

Based on

- Monthly visits to local clinics
- Recording availability of 12 medicines (vital, essential)
- Reporting back via an app



Success stories

1. Village Clinic

The struggle to get a new clinic in Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape (Village clinic), followed very tenaciously by Mtshana Mvlisi (6-7 stories)

2. Mthatha depot collapse (national story)

3. Getting water restored to two Vhembe villages (Suprise Nematlale)

4. Improved school toilets

(Suprise Nematlale and Mishack Mahlangu)



Conclusion

- OurHealth surpassed our expectations
- Contributed to the policy document developed by the Presidency's Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, called "A framework for strengthening citizen-government partnerships for monitoring frontline service delivery"
- Can be scaled up
- There is talent in our villages!

