



Kenya Medical Association

Championing the Welfare of Doctors and Quality Healthcare in Kenya

Kenya Medical Association's Input on The Healthcare Professional's Policy 2025

Policy Vision:

To provide skilled, motivated and adequately distributed healthcare professionals (HCPs) that deliver high quality, equitable and accessible health services to all.

Policy Mission:

To develop and sustain a competent, responsive and resilient HCP that meets the diverse needs of the Kenyan population.

Policy Objectives:

1. Strengthen and operationalize HRH governance, coordination, and partnership mechanisms.
2. Ensure adequate planning and financing of Healthcare Professionals' education, employment, and retention.
3. Align HCP training programs with harmonized curricula and population health needs, using a competency-based education approach.
4. Develop and implement a legislative and regulatory framework for HCPs training, practice, licensing, and continuing professional development in both public and private sectors.
5. Review staffing norms and standards and ensure optimal recruitment and deployment of trained HCPs.
6. Improve governance, coordination, and tracking of HCP migration.
7. Improve the availability and use of accurate, reliable, and up-to-date data on Healthcare Professionals.

Challenges facing the healthcare workforce in Kenya

1. Weak leadership-collaboration and coordination between National and County levels leading to:
 - a) Delays in policy implementation
 - b) Uneven distribution of HCPs
 - c) Lack / ineffective collaboration between National and County authorities
 - d) Frequent changes in leadership at County level leading to loss of institutional memory

2. Inadequate planning and financing of HCPs:
 - a) Lack of policies that analyse HRH data and determine strategies to ensure the availability of adequate numbers of staff with appropriate needs based distribution.
 - b) Poor resourcing, effective maintenance and relevant equipment access and policies/ program for effective sustained service delivery.
 - c) The inadequate allocation of resources compromises the quality of healthcare services provided to citizens, hindering the realization of the Governments' priority of achieving UHC.
3. Inadequate numbers of trained HCPs:
 - a) Inability of existing medical training programs to produce an adequate and quality healthcare workforce with the right skills and competencies as per the population health needs
 - b) Lack of regulated, coordinated and responsive training programmes responsive to the various cadres necessary for a Teams of HCPs.
 - c) Inability to absorb and retain trained HCPs and proper/ clear career progression programs.
4. Deficiencies in employment / earning opportunities for HCPs
 - a) Inadequate budgetary allocations at County level to ensure adequate employment, equal remuneration and conducive working conditions for HCPs
 - b) Absence proper policies to safeguard/ ensure timely and proper payment and earnings of HCPs both in Private and Public sector
5. Migration of HCPs
 - a) This has led to disparities in workforce distribution and brain drain and inequity in healthcare delivery to Kenyan citizens
 - b) Absence of deliberate motivational, fulfilling and promotive working environment and terms
 - c) Lack of policies to promote better working environments and terms to discourage brain drain
 - d) Promotion of victimization and or discriminatory social image on HCP issues negatively impacting HCPs social standing

6. Lack of regulation of all HCPs
 - a) Lack of formal oversight of a significant number of HCPs cadres which has contributed to malpractice and unethical conduct
 - b) Absence of supported non state yet professional (HCP) based authority to self-monitor/ regulate
7. Lack of harmonized data and information on HCPs
 - a) Lack of an interoperable HCPs information system

Summary of Recommendations

The Healthcare Professionals Policy 2025 identifies key challenges affecting healthcare providers in Kenya. These challenges in turn impact healthcare delivery. To address these challenges, we propose the establishment of a National Health Services Commission, comprising health professionals representing all healthcare registered healthcare professional bodies in the country.

1. This Commission would serve as a critical bridge between healthcare professionals and the government, supporting healthcare governance by offering leadership-collaboration and coordination between National and County governments. The Commission would facilitate the effective implementation of the policy objectives without the risking loss of institutional memory.

The Commission's primary role would be to operationalize and strengthen Human Resources for Health (HRH) governance, coordination, and partnerships, as stipulated in the policy objectives.

2. The Commission would work with National and County governments to ensure adequate and timely planning for the financing of healthcare professionals' education, employment, and retention based on pre-existing training needs and staffing norms data collected both at national level and by individual healthcare professional bodies. In addition, the Commission would support harmonized training programs and curricula that are aligned with national population health needs. The Commission would continually review and monitor staffing norms and standards, ensuring that the healthcare workforce is optimally trained, recruited, and deployed to meet the country's health demands.

3. The Commission would support the establishment and enforcement of a legislative and regulatory framework that governs the training, practice, licensing, and continuous professional development of healthcare professionals, ensuring high standards of professionalism in both public and private healthcare sectors.
4. The Commission would work in collaboration with National and County governments to improve HRH governance, coordination, and tracking of healthcare worker migration to mitigate the negative effects of brain drain and ensure that the health sector retains its skilled workforce. The Commission would also support the National and County health budgeting processes to enhance budgetary allocations for health, increasing HCPs financial space, and providing targeted incentives for HCPs.
5. The Commission, composed of professional bodies representing HCPs will actively support the design and roll out process of a HCPs information system that will centralize information on HCPs demographics, skills, training, deployment and performance. The Commission would oversee the collection, maintenance, and use of accurate, reliable, and up-to-date data on healthcare professionals to support better workforce planning and evidence-based policy making.

Ultimately, the National Health Services Commission would provide a unified and structured approach to managing healthcare professionals in Kenya. By aligning with the policy's objectives, it would contribute to resolving the recurrent systemic issues that hinder effective healthcare delivery, including shortages of trained professionals, inequitable distribution of resources, and lack of professional development opportunities. The Commission's efforts would improve both the governance and service delivery in the healthcare sector, ensuring that the Kenyan population has access to high-quality health services.

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