

Time to combat the burden of disease on South Africa's healthcare system

Pfizer has highlighted the importance of local vaccine manufacturing as one of the efforts to address the burden of disease on the South African healthcare system.



Source: [Rxabay](#)

Speaking at a joint media roundtable with the Biovac Institute, Pfizer South Africa country manager Kevin Francis said: "The benefits of local vaccine manufacture cannot be overlooked and are certainly the path to national success.

"Ensuring that existing partnerships between government and private entities are supported and prolonged will allow South Africa to reap the healthcare and economic rewards while cementing its authority as a global leader in healthcare development - an attribute that will undoubtedly attract greater investment and prosperity into the country".

The key to SA's economic success

Research indicates that more than 12,500 vaccine-related positions can be created by 2040 on the continent. The African continent imports between 80% and 90% of all medicines, and while the Global Alliance for Vaccines Initiative (Gavi) provides access to vaccines for low-income countries, South Africa's middle-income designation means it does not qualify for the subsidy.

"The key to stimulating South Africa's economy lies in the local manufacturing of vaccines, which will see increased investments and intracontinental trade, as well as much-needed employment opportunities," adds Patrick Tippoo, head of science and innovation at the Biovac Institute.

Crucial for the prosperity of SA's children

It is recommended that all children be vaccinated against diseases, particularly given the threat of disease resurgence in South Africa. This after the country's sub-optimal childhood immunisation coverage falls below the required 90% target set by the World Health Organization's Global Vaccine Action Plan (WHO) after nationwide lockdown protocols in 2020 saw

vaccination figures drastically decline.

“Interventions such as the Department of Health’s Expanded Programme on Immunisation are proving effective in assisting the country in meeting its goals and avoiding a future catastrophe,” concludes Prof. Prakash Jeena, paediatric pulmonologist and head of the paediatric intensive care and pulmonology department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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