



# **ADVANCING ACTIONS TOWARDS ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE IN SAINT LUCIA**

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# COUNTRY PROFILE



**Saint Lucia** is a small volcanic island midway down the Eastern Caribbean chain, 40 km south of Martinique and 32km north of St. Vincent. The island has an area of 238 sq miles/616sq km (measuring 27 miles long and 14 miles wide).



The current population of **Saint Lucia** is approximately **180,360**.  
The population density in Saint Lucia is 295 per Km<sup>2</sup> (765 people per mi<sup>2</sup>).  
Life Expectancy: Women - 81.6  
Men – 75.9

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>GDP Growth Rate</b>	2.9%	-0.3%	-25.4%	12.2%	18.1%
<b>Annual Inflation</b>	2.6%	0.5%	-1.8%	2.4%	6.4%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	20.2%	16.8%	21.7%	21.9%	16.5%
<b>Debt to GDP Ratio</b>	59.4%	60.3%	98.1%	85.9%	69.8%



# SNAPSHOT OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM



- 34 Wellness Centers
- 1 Polyclinic
- 2 District Hospital
- 2 Public Hospitals
  - St Jude Hospital (South)
  - Millenium Heights Medical Complex (North) – (Owen King EU Hospital, St Lucia National Mental Wellness Center, Turning Point Drug Rehabilitation and Detoxification Center)
- 1 Private Hospital – Tapion Hospital
- Other Private Clinics and Doctors' Offices

# UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE IN SLU – A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



- Health Sector Reform Task Force (1997)
- Cabinet of Ministers' Approval of the Health Sector Reform White Paper (2000)
- Task Force to examine the feasibility of introducing Unemployment Insurance, Pension Plan for Farmers and Fishers and National Health Insurance (2002).
- UHC Team formed under the National Insurance Corporation which looked at a basket of health services, acquired health information system, drafted business rules and UHC legislation
- First phase of UHC Implemented – free drugs to Diabetic Patients, and Diabetics with Co-Morbidity of Hypertension

# UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE IN SLU – A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



- Unofficial Package of Health Services – Vaccination, HIV/AIDS Drugs and Diagnostics, treatment and drugs for Communicable Diseases such as Hansen's, Tuberculosis, drugs for Diabetes and Hypertension, services at Primary Health Facilities at no cost to patients.
- In 2013/2014 reexamined the Essential Package of Health Services and costing.

# DRIVERS OF HEALTH FINANCING REFORM



- Rising Cost of Healthcare Services – Given the general increase in prices world wide, Saint Lucia is experiencing similar cost pressures, leading to a need for reforms to manage healthcare expenditure.
- Commitment to Universal Health Coverage – The Government of Saint Lucia has committed to UHC. Health financing reform is an crucial aspect to expand healthcare services to the citizens without financial hardship.
- The need to address equity and access to reduce the disparities in Health.
  - Exponential increase in medical assistance budget from XCD\$800,000 to XCD\$3 Mil
  - Anecdotal Information: Increasing number of people seeking to raise funds to cover medical expenses
- Financial Protection –
  - High OOPE (over 40%), there is need to reduce this burden
  - Low Private Health Insurance Coverage – 15% of population covered

# DRIVERS OF HEALTH FINANCING REFORMS



- Investment in Health Infrastructure has necessitated changes in healthcare financing to support the maintenance and expansion.
- There is a need to improve efficiency and quality.
- The increase in the CNCD burden as well as an aging population has impacted healthcare demand.
- Governance and Accountability – to ensure that resources are used effectively and recipients of public finance for health are held accountable for results



# STEPS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE



- Creation of the UHC Unit within the MOHWEA – includes a Director, Project Officer, Administrative Assistant, Accounts Clerk, Finance Officer.
- Launch of Phase I of UHC - Maternal and Child Health Services.
  - Analysis be conducted on the possible inclusion of Renal Care Services, Snake Bites, expansion of MCH services and early cancer screening.
- Implementation of the Performance Based Financing Pilot Project - 18 Primary Health Care Facilities, 8 in the first phase.
- World Bank Health System Strengthening Project (USD\$25 Million) to support implementation of UHC, strengthening of Primary Health Care and the implementation of the PBF Pilot Project

# STEPS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE



- Exploring the Public/Private Partnerships - Under Maternal and Child Health and PBF Pilot Project.
- Political Will: Implementation of a 2.5% Health and Security Levy which is expected to raise XCD\$30 million.

# CHALLENGES



- Health and Security Levy 2.5% - Consolidated Fund and No Decision as to the amount allocated to Health
- Outdated Fee Structure at Hospitals which does not reflect the actual cost of delivering services.
- Regulations – Public Financial Management Act
- Current Organizational Structure of MOHWEA – provider of Primary Health Care Services
- Health Management Information System – challenges with efficiency and use by Clinicians and support Staff, the information which is being collected.

# CHALLENGES



- Human Resources for Health – Migration of Nurses, Health Aides and Shortage of Pharmacists
- Public Perception of Quality of Care in the Public Sector
- Need to reorient the Population that health care is not “free”
- Need to regulate health facilities through the licensing requirements.

# STRATEGIES TO MINIMIZE STUMBLING BLOCKS



**Human Resources for Health** a Retention policy for Nurses developed and bilateral agreements/ country cooperation is currently underway. ①

## Health Service Delivery

- PBF pilot project, the Castries Urban Polyclinic, Centres of Excellence and
- ② Strengthening of National Referral Network

## Health Information System

- Registration of the population, updating SLUHIS/related hardware. This will be complemented by a training policy for clinicians. ⑥

## Infrastructure

- ③ SMARTing of health systems to ensure disaster preparedness and resilience through structurally sound facilities and reducing environmental foot print.

## Governance

- Updating the national health strategic plan, development of the UHC strategy and UHC business rules as well as drafting UHC legislation, Creation of Health Fund, MOHWEA as a regulator of Health, legislation for the Quality Assurance Unit

## Medicines/Biomedical Equipment

- ④ Expansion of warehouse for central procurement supplies and looking to increase budget for pharmaceuticals



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION**



**Ministry of Health, Wellness and Elderly Affairs  
Saint Lucia**

