

Statement on Essential Health Research

- This policy conference recognises essential health research as an important and underutilised tool in the improvement of the nation's health.
- The conference supports the need for an Essential National Health Research Policy and Programme in South Africa. Such a Programme should have the status of national policy, should be oriented to the country's priority health problems, and must be premised on the pursuit of equity and social justice.
- To achieve this, a process is necessary that effectively brings together representatives of health services at all levels, education and research institutions, and health and development NGOs, together with community leadership. Carefully determining the lead partners, and ensuring an appropriate balance of all sectors of our society, is a critical part of this.
- Key considerations:
 - by research is meant a systematic process to generate new knowledge. This capacity needs to be strengthened among all partners active in health in South Africa.
 - an ENHR programme in South Africa should pay special attention to strengthening the community's ability to effectively engage in the process.
 - a South African ENHR programme should make a major investment in strengthening individual and institutional capacity in underdeveloped disciplines that include the measurement sciences, policy and management sciences, and social and behavioural sciences.
 - a national essential health research programme should ensure a major investment at local and district level, as well as, the regional and national level.
- As the SAHSSO/NPPHCN Policy Conference, we will support and encourage the contribution of our human and organisational resources to the realisation of this goal.