Advocacy agenda

SAHTAC supports evidence-based policy change and implementation, improved coordination of health R&D funding mechanisms, and a coordinated advocacy approach. Through partnership, evidence generation, and accountability measures, SAHTAC advocates for:

- **Implementation of existing policies related to health R&D.** The South African government has established a robust policy framework for managing, coordinating, and funding R&D. These policies, however, must be aligned and fully implemented. SAHTAC calls for increased accountability in the implementation of government policies and commitments.
- **Improved financing for health R&D.** The availability and accessibility of funding for health R&D enables local researchers to grow South Africa's innovation sector and ensures that research priorities are locally generated. Along with improved access to health R&D funding, SAHTAC supports strengthened coordination across government institutions that provide this funding.
- **Bolstered civil society engagement in health R&D.** Civil society can play a critical role in holding the government accountable to commitments and ensuring that health R&D-related strategies are implemented. Civil society has long called for improved access to health care in South Africa; by mobilizing around this issue, civil society can increase political will to create an innovation system that will improve health outcomes.

Advocates and technical experts from across the health spectrum understand the importance of R&D in ensuring that health products are available to those most in need. SAHTAC brings these stakeholders together to elevate this common message and to ensure that health R&D is prioritized as a means of growing South Africa's economy and guaranteeing a higher quality of life for its people.

How to get involved

Any legally registered organization or institution interested in health R&D advocacy in South Africa may apply to join SAHTAC. Currently, the coalition's secretariat is hosted at The Aurum Institute offices in Tembisa, South Africa.
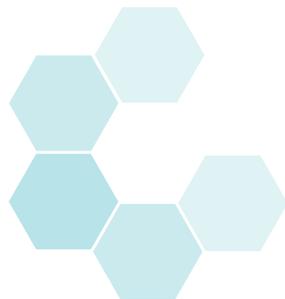
For more information about how to become involved, please contact:

SAHTAC Project Manager Sakhile Khaweka
email: khaweka@auruminstitute.org

or

SAHTAC Team Lead- John Mdluli
Jmdluli@auruminstitute.org

You can also follow us on Twitter for updates: @SAHTACtweets

Research and Development for Health in South Africa

The South African Health Technologies Advocacy Coalition (SAHTAC)

SAHTAC's Mission

To advocate for an enabling environment for research, development, and access to lifesaving technologies and innovations.

Introduction

Research and development (R&D) is critical to ensuring that high-impact, affordable health technologies reach the people who need them most. In low- and middle-income countries, a policy and regulatory environment that encourages innovation can lead to enhanced economic growth and better social outcomes. Moreover, domestic investment in health R&D guarantees that solutions reflect a country's priority health needs.

The government of South Africa has demonstrated commitment to health R&D, passing a number of policies and strategies aimed at bolstering the country's innovation agenda. Additionally, government funding for health R&D has increased over the past decade and has met an important international commitment to direct 2 percent of

the national health budget to R&D. These policies and commitments should ultimately translate science, research, and technological development into economic growth and a higher quality of life for South Africa's people—implementation, however, remains a challenge.

Advocacy is therefore needed to ensure that policies are fully implemented, funding mechanisms are aligned, and accountability measures are in place to monitor progress. Civil society has a role to play in these advocacy efforts by holding the government accountable to R&D- related commitments and ensuring that science is translated into tangible economic and social benefits for all people in South Africa.

Bringing together civil society voices for health

Recognizing the potential of advocacy to impact South Africa's innovation system, a group of non-governmental organizations launched the South African Health Technologies Advocacy Coalition (SAHTAC) in 2016.

Each member organization has a history of advocating for improved health technologies, programs, and services—from HIV and tuberculosis, to maternal, newborn, and child health. Through coordinated advocacy, SAHTAC is underscoring the importance of increasing access to life-saving technologies across the health spectrum. SAHTAC will enable all member organizations to achieve mutually shared goals that support the research and development of high-impact health interventions in South Africa.