
Briefing Note for Decision

Department of Health Briefing Note for Decision To: Minister of Health From: [Your Name], Policy Advisor Date: October 28, 2024

Subject: Expansion of National Mental Health Services

Purpose:

- To obtain the Minister's approval for the expansion of mental health services across the country.

Background:

- Mental health issues are rising, impacting economic productivity and increasing healthcare costs. The current national mental health programs cover only 50% of the population in need, primarily in urban centers.

Current Status:

- Preliminary studies and pilot programs in select regions have demonstrated significant benefits, including reduced hospitalization rates and improved patient outcomes through expanded services.

Considerations:

- **Advantages:**
 - Broader access to mental health services, reducing long-term healthcare costs.
 - Alignment with WHO recommendations for mental health coverage.
 - Potential to use telehealth services to reach underserved areas.
- **Challenges:**

- Requires increased funding allocation from the national budget.
- Need for training and recruitment of specialized mental health professionals.
- Infrastructure development for remote and rural area service delivery.

Options for Decision:

1. **Approve the proposed expansion:** Fully implement the expanded services nationwide with allocated budget increases.
2. **Phase the expansion:** Start with the most underserved regions to evaluate impact before national rollout.
3. **Maintain current services:** Continue with the existing scope of services without expansion.

Recommendation:

- Recommend Option 1. The immediate approval and implementation of the proposed expansion will address the urgent need for mental health services, particularly in light of the increasing prevalence of mental health issues post-pandemic.

Conclusion:

- Approving this expansion is a critical step towards achieving national health objectives and improving the quality of life for citizens struggling with mental health issues.

Attachments:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis Report
- Feedback from Pilot Program Stakeholders
- WHO Guidelines on Mental Health Services