



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
Issued by: Department of Health
Date: Tuesday, 07 April 2026

World Health Day commemoration: 07 April 2026

Pretoria: The Department of Health in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), joins the global community today to commemorate the World Health Day to raise awareness about critical health issues including promoting health equity, which emphasizes the significance of fair access to healthcare for all citizens, regardless of their social status, race, geographic location, highlighting health as a fundamental human right.

The World Health Day is one of the designated 13 global health days and weeks on the WHO calendar, observed annually to raise awareness and understanding about specific health issues and mobilize support for action, from the local community to the international stage. This day is commemorated annually on 07 April and draws attention to a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world.

The 2026 campaign will be observed under the theme: “***Together for Health. Stand with Science***”, which urges governments, scientists, health professionals, partners, and communities to champion science and evidence as the basis for safeguarding and enhancing health. The campaign emphasises the importance of scientific collaboration and innovation in tackling complex health issues, including emerging diseases, environmental dangers, and pressures on health systems.

The Department will use the 2026 World Health Day virtual commemorative event scheduled for Thursday, 09 April (**full details to follow**) to showcase the successes and highlight collaboration between government, academia, research institutions, and promote science-based decision-making in health policy and practice. These achievements include the recent recognition of South Africa by United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Chemicals and Health Branch and the Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP) for its leadership in developing and implementing regulatory framework that address the risks of lead paint. The LEEP is an international nonprofit dedicated to eliminating lead exposure in children, mainly from low-and-middle income countries.

South Africa has adopted a legally binding controls on lead paint, marking an important milestone toward protecting public health and accelerating regional progress toward lead-safe homes and communities. This recognition underscores the country’s commitment to protecting public health, safeguarding workers, and ensuring safer environments through effective regulation and enforcement.

Some of the participants at the event include the representatives of various stakeholders in the sector including the World Health Organization country director, Ms Shenaaz Elhalabi, academics, scientists, researchers, public health specialists, etc. The Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla will deliver the keynote address.

Details of the webinar are as follows:

Date: Thursday, 09 April 2026

Time: 11h00

Virtual link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YsYCUFbKSuGrqn7gkuVioQ

For more information and media enquiries, please contact:

Mr Foster Mohale
Health Departmental Spokesperson
0724323792
Foster.mohale@health.gov.za

Mr Sello Lediga
Health Ministry Spokesperson
0823539859
Sello.Lediga@health.gov.za