

An aerial photograph of a city in Mauritius, showing a dense urban area with various buildings and a large green mountain in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent silhouette of the island of Mauritius. The background is divided into four large, overlapping triangular sections in red, yellow, blue, and green.

MAURITIUS' HEALTH SECTOR

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1. Country Overview

Mauritius is an island country in the Indian Ocean located off the eastern coast of Africa. The country has several islands of volcanic origin which include the main island of Mauritius, Rodrigues on the east, Agalega, and uninhabited archipelago of the Cargados Carajos Shoals islands.

Its capital and largest city is Port Louis. The country has the highest population density in Africa. Almost the entire population lives in island of Mauritius. In 2020 the population size was 1.37 million people ^[1].

Mauritian Creole, French and English are the most spoken languages in the country. English is the official language, although Mauritian Creole is the lingua franca. Citizens with Indian, African, Chinese and French origins make up the population of the country ^[2].

After gaining independence in 1968 from Dutch, French and British rule, the country adopted a parliamentary republic type of government. The country has a single house legislative system, which is the parliament. The members of parliament are elected for five years. The head of state is the president and the head of government is the prime minister ^[3].

Mauritius has multilateral, bilateral and regional trade agreements already in place. It is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a beneficiary of Generalized System of Preferences (GPS), a Free Trade Agreement member of the Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). It is under the continental free trade agreement and also has bilateral trade agreements with Pakistan, Turkey, China, USA and many more ^[4].

The country's infrastructure is well developed. The main transportation methods are road, air, and port. It has a reliable and efficient road network of 1,910 kilometres with 1,834 kilometres of them being paved. It also has Port Louis along its coast, which handles high traffic of goods in and out of the country. The port aims to become a major transshipment centre because of its strategic location between Africa, Asia and Australia. The country has five airports in which two of them have paved runways ^[5]. The country relies on manufactured exports, agriculture, tourism and financial services for its economy. Earlier, it relied largely on sugar production, but the economy has since been successfully diversified. In July 2020, Mauritius was classified as a high-income country by World Bank ^[6].



1.1. Key Country Statistics



74 years
Life expectancy
at birth, 2018



3.0
GDP growth
(annual %), 2019



38.5^[7] Exports of
goods and services
as a % of GDP, 2019



53.7 Imports of
goods and services
as % of GDP, 2019



Imported products: Refined petroleum (**\$880M**), non-fillet frozen fish (**\$228**), cars (**\$218M**) and packaged medicaments (**\$124M**), and petroleum gas (**\$113M**)



Exported products: Processed Fish (**\$310M**), Raw Sugar (**\$155M**), Knit and non-Knit (T-shirts, Shirts and Men's Suits) (**\$423**)



Negative
\$2.05B^[8]
Balance of
trade, 2019

2. COVID-19

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the government has prioritized the health and wellbeing of its citizens over the economy of the country. To control the pandemic, there has been heavy reliance on response from the government, support from private and humanitarian organizations and compliance by the public.

Since 18th March 2020, when the first three cases were reported in the country, several measures have been put in place to combat the pandemic. Borders were closed, a curfew imposed and thereafter a complete lockdown. Efforts have been made to boost the existing health system, including a hotline telephone service to answer public queries. A home visit team was set up to provide local visit consultations and basic treatment. A mobile application, BeSafeMoris, was also launched to allow citizens to obtain real-time information about health and safety measures. The annual anti-influenza vaccination was rolled out for the elderly population to reduce the impact of COVID-19, since it was winter in the southern hemisphere, and is a condition which increases the severity of COVID-19^[9]. As of 26th April 2021, the total number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 were 1,206 with 16 deaths^[10].

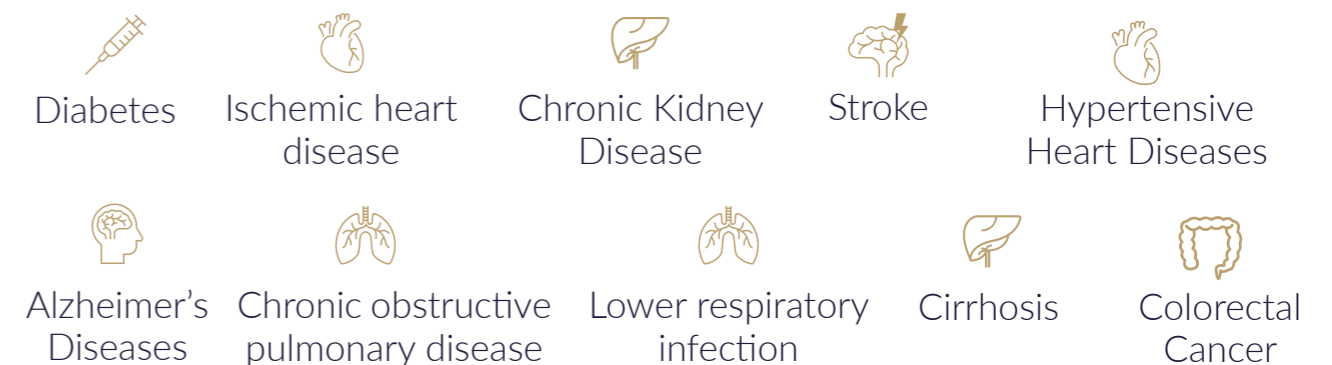
3. Health Overview

The health sector in Mauritius is developed. The ministry of health and Quality of Life is responsible for public healthcare. Public healthcare services are free and accessible to Mauritius citizens. The health sector is served by both public and private sectors. The public sector meets 73% of the health needs of the population while private healthcare facilities meet 23%. The country's health system infrastructure consist of 5 major public hospitals, 6 specialized public hospitals, 18 private multi-specialty clinics and 28 medical laboratories^[11].

The Mauritius government has integrated UHC into its health plan. It acknowledges health as a human right, and therefore strives to provide free health services in the public sector to the entire population, which it hopes will drive economic growth and prosperity. It has also prioritised health on its socio-economic agenda and is in a joint action with private sector and the general public to promote healthy lifestyles and sustainable environment free from health hazards^[12]. In an effort to strengthen the health sector, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in World Health Organization (WHO) and other several stakeholders developed a Health Sector Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2024 for the country. This aimed to outline a road map for health development and actions which will address health challenges across the lifespan of citizens^[13].

The demographic status of the population is marked by a rapidly aging population as a result of increased life expectancy and low fertility rates, which is below replacement level. This has been a challenge in the country. Communicable diseases and problems of maternal and child health (MCH) have declined and are being controlled effectively. HIV prevalence is still high among the key population. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries account for 84% and 7% respectively of the total burden of disease. Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), diabetes, and cancer are the leading causes of death in Mauritius^[14].

Top 10 causes of death in Mauritius



3.1 Key Health Statistics



5.83
Current health
expenditure (%
of GDP), 2018

56.35
Domestic private
health expenditure
(% of CHE), 2018

43.15
Domestic general
government expenditure
(% of CHE), 2018



48.54
Out-of-pocket
expenditure (%
of CHE), 2018



77
Maternal mortality ratio
(national estimate per
100,000 live births), 2017



16^[15]
Under 5 mortality
rate (per 1,000 live
births), 2019

*World Bank data, 2018

4. Challenges Facing the Private Health Sector

- Relatively low health financing by the government. It does not meet the Abuja Declaration requirements, which advocates for 15% of the country's budget to be allocated to health.
- Inadequate interagency cooperation in the private sector.
- Expensive healthcare services in private sector.

5. Opportunities for the Private Sector

- The percentage of health needs of population met by private sector is still low. This reach can still exponentially grow through more investment in the private sector.
- The launch of the Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2024 in August 2020, which outlines the roadmap to deal with health-related challenges in the lifespan of citizens, brings opportunities to private sector in terms engagement and collaboration with the Mauritius government.
- Mauritius is one of the best tourism destinations in the world. The government has made tremendous efforts to support health in the tourism sector. It is currently under bilateral social security agreements with several countries, including the UK. This only meets health insurance needs of some foreigners. More investment and support can be made to support all the foreigners in the country.
- Mauritius' strategic location between Africa, Asia and Australia can help private investors leverage the manufacturing and distribution of health products.

Do you need more in-depth information on Mauritius' health sector and how your project or business can contribute?

AHB offers a wide range of tailor-made market, feasibility and strategy studies based on your needs. Our market intelligence services are designed to help you gain in-dept insight in a particular (sub) health sector, understand the opportunities and challenges for your project or business and provide you with recommendations that allow you to pursue the growth of your organisation in a particular (sub) sector or region.

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