

Data Capturer Internship Program at Health Facility Level, South Africa

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Background

The Health Information System for Data Capturers (HISDC) Project, an initiative by the National Department of Health (NDoH) aims to address both the inadequate opportunities for career development in the public sector as well as to build national capacity for data management at the level where health data is collected i.e. facility level. This project which is mapped to be implemented over a period of three years is in its second year of implementation. The project is implemented by a consortium comprising the Continuing Education at the University of Pretoria Trust, Health Systems Trust and the Health Information System Programme.

Implementation

Of the 3,535 post-matriculant students that are targeted to be trained over the period of three years 1,064 were trained in health information systems in the first year (training Wave 1) and have been placed to serve a one-year internship period at a public health facility. The aim of the one-year internship is to offer Data Capturers valuable work experience and practical

training in health information. Additionally, 10% of interns per Wave will receive scholarships to further their education at an institute of higher learning. The opportunity also exists for Data Capturers to be absorbed into the public service.

Results

Following the conclusion of the training Wave1, post-training workshops were successfully conducted in all provinces. The outcomes of these workshops reveal interesting perspectives from Data Capturers themselves as well as district and facility-based mentors that involved in the support and mentorship of Data Capturers. At the same time this initiative to strengthen the national health information systems has highlighted that the implementation of such wide scale capacity development initiatives requires both infrastructure as well as sustainable mechanisms for ongoing development and support.

This paper discusses both the successes and challenges of this programme and presents recommendations to support Data Capturers during their internship period.