NATIONAL LABORATORY POLICY

Laboratory services play a crucial role in the detection, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of diseases in patients. An estimated 70% of all decisions regarding a patient’s diagnosis and treatment, hospital admission and discharge are based on laboratory test results.

Recognising the importance of timely and accurate laboratory results on the quality of patient care, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has elaborated a National Laboratory Policy with the assistance of the World Health Organization.

The National Laboratory Policy provides for the overall framework and strategies for establishing, strengthening and maintaining the national health laboratory system. The National Laboratory Policy defines minimum standards of diagnostic services to support the following:

(i) Clinical diagnostic services;
(ii) Public health laboratory services with proper rapid response to emergencies and outbreak investigations;
(iii) Reference laboratory services; and
(iv) Support to research relevant to delivery of diagnostic services.

This Policy addresses clinical and public health services delivery at each level of the healthcare system and includes the following twelve policy elements:

- Regulatory and legal framework
- Laboratory organisation and management structure
- Laboratory standards
- Laboratory workforce
- Quality management system
- Laboratory infrastructure
- Procurement and supplies management
- Laboratory safety and waste management
- Laboratory information management system (LIMS)
- Research and development
- Laboratory financing
- Public private partnerships

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