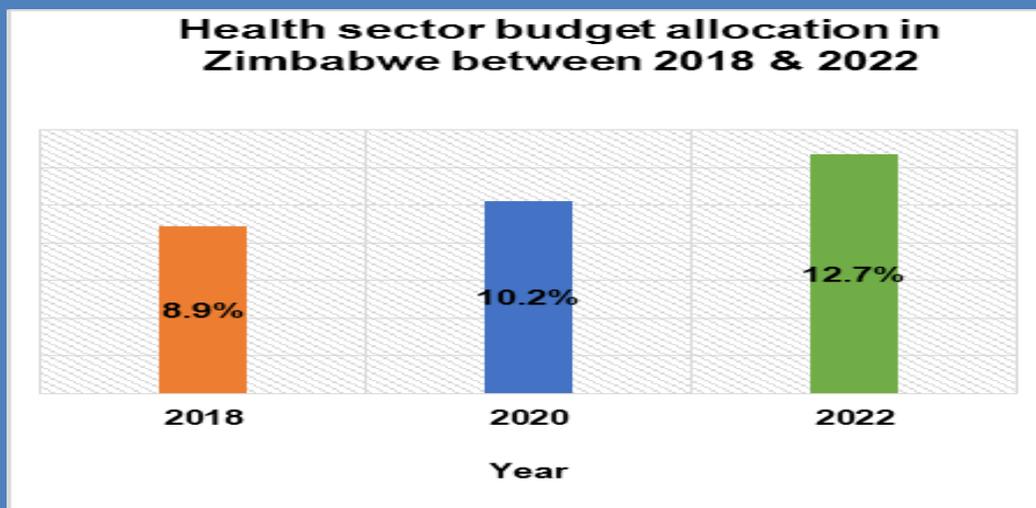


# ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE (ZDI) ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTH MONITORING REPORT

## DECEMBER 2021

### ZIMBABWE NATIONAL 2022 BUDGET: ABUJA DECLARATION STILL A DREAM FOR ZIMBABWE



Source: ZDI 2021, Dataset: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development National Budget Presentations, 2018, 2020 and 2021.

#### About the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI)

The Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) is a politically independent and not for profit public policy think-tank based in Zimbabwe. Founded and registered as a trust in terms of the laws of Zimbabwe in November 2012, ZDI serves to generate and disseminate innovative ideas, cutting-edge research and policy analysis to advance democracy, development, good governance and human rights in Zimbabwe. The institute also aims to promote open, informed and evidence-based debate by bringing together pro-democracy experts to platforms for debate. The idea is to offer new ideas to policy makers with the view to entrenching democratic practices in Zimbabwe. The ZDI researches, publishes and conducts national policy debates and conferences in democratization, good governance, public policy, human rights and transitional justice, media and democracy relations, electoral politics and international affairs.

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## Introduction

The health sector in Zimbabwe continues to receive funding that falls short of the universally accepted share of the country's total budget. The advent of Covid-19 in 2019 and its ravaging effects<sup>1</sup> across the globe required countries to strengthen their health disaster response systems by ensuring adequate health sector funding. In Zimbabwe as at 20 December 2021, over 192 000 people were infected by Covid-19 and the pandemic had killed more than 4 000 people.<sup>2</sup>

With new Covid-19 variants being discovered, the country's health delivery system ought to be strengthened in a bid to reduce the level of catastrophe brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. Such strengthening of health care systems is reflected by the allocation of the health sector in the country's national budget vis-à-vis the regional standards for health financing. The Zimbabwe 2022 national budget, despite coming against a background of the ravaging effects of Covid-19, failed to meet the Abuja Declaration of allocating 15% of the total budget to health.

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<sup>1</sup> By 20 December 2021, the coronavirus across the globe had infected and killed 275 340 568 and 5 373 852 people respectively. [Covid-19 Live – Coronavirus Statistics – Worldometer]

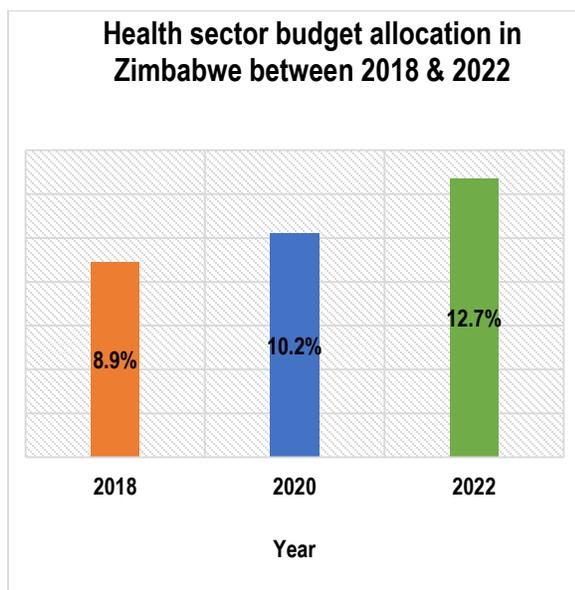
<sup>2</sup> In Zimbabwe according to the Worldometer Coronavirus Statistics, 192 796 people were infected by Covid-19 and deaths stood at 4 787 by 20 December 2021.

## Health sector funding in the 2022 national budget

On 25 November 2021, Minister of Finance and Economic Development Mthuli Ncube presented the country's 2022 national budget to the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Amidst the continued spread of Covid-19 in the country just like elsewhere across the globe, expectations were high that the health sector would get adequate funding in line with the Abuja Declaration. However, as was the case in previous budgeting years, the 2021 national budget of Zimbabwe failed to allocate the 15% of the total budget to the health sector. Instead, the health sector allocation stood at 12.7% of the total ZWL\$927.3 billion which is expected to be expended during the year 2022.

However, in his 22 national budget speech, Minister Mthuli Ncube boldly lied to the nation that **“the 2022 national budget has allocated ZWL\$117.7 billion to the Ministry of Health and Child Care which represents 14.9 of the budget.”** The fact of the matter is that health ministry was allocated ZWL\$117.7 billion against a total budget of ZWL\$927.3 billion. As the Minister of Finance, Professor Mthuli Ncube should have found out that health sector's allocation represents 12.7% of the total budget before making a presentation before the parliament.

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Abuja Declaration which is a commitment that was made in 2001 by African heads of state to commit 15% of their yearly budgets to funding the health sector. The need to achieve this feat, in the case of Zimbabwe and other countries in Africa, was made a priority in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic which requires that health systems must always be adequately resourced to deal with threats posed by health disasters that are similar to Covid-19.



*Source: ZDI 2021, Dataset: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development National Budget Presentations, 2018, 2020 and 2021.*

As indicated above, healthcare spending in Zimbabwe has improved from 2018 and is set improve further in 2022. However, the funding still fall short of the Abuja Declaration of 15% of the total budget.

## Conclusion

The continued threat posed by Covid-19 and its new emerging variants requires that the government of Zimbabwe adequately finances the healthcare delivery system. This goes a long way in

## Recommendations

### Government of Zimbabwe

- ✓ Ensuring that the healthcare delivery system is adequately resourced by meeting the Abuja Declaration.
- ✓ The Ministry of Health and Child Care should lobby for sufficient resourcing amidst Covid-19 in a bid to safeguard the health sector from future health crises.

### Civil Society

- ✓ Advocating for the adequate financing of the health sector by the government in line with the Abuja Declaration

### Media

- ✓ Reporting on the country's health sector funding vis-à-vis the Abuja Declaration threshold.

- ✓ Playing a media advocacy role to promote adequate resourcing of the country's healthcare systems.