Factsheet: Key Health System Challenges in Kenya

1. Inadequate Resourcing for Health

The problem	• Budget Shortfalls: Health received only 3.69% of the 2022/23 national budget, far below the 15% Abuja Declaration and 5% WHO GDP recommendations. • Healthcare Access: Only 19.9% of Kenyans are covered by NHIF; 80.1% rely on out-of-pocket payments. • Workforce Shortages: Kenya's doctor-to-patient and nurse-to-patient ratios fall short of WHO standards. • Donor Dependence: Over-reliance on external funding limits local priority setting. • Corruption: Resource mismanagement undermines service delivery and public trust.
Recommendations:	• Allocate at least 15% of the national budget and 5% of GDP to health. • Roll out the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) based on equity, transparency, and accountability principles. • Revise the Kenya Health Sector Strategic Plan to prioritize increased budget allocations and health worker density.

2. HIV Prevention for Key Populations

The problem	• Service Gaps: Limited access to PrEP, condoms, and HIV testing for key populations, including people who inject drugs and transgender individuals. • High Prison Prevalence: HIV prevalence in prisons (12–15%) is much higher than the national average (3.7%). • Stigma: Discrimination deters key populations from seeking healthcare.
Recommendations:	• Review and implement the 2014 Key Populations Guidelines, ensuring tailored HIV programs for SOGIESC persons and prisoners. • Scale up access to condoms, PrEP, and integrated HIV care in prisons. • Combat stigma through targeted anti-discrimination campaigns and rights-based healthcare policies.

3. Gaps in TB Service Delivery

The problem	• Stigma: TB patients, especially those co-infected with HIV, face systemic discrimination. • Outdated Treatments: Older regimens with severe side effects reduce adherence. • Service Integration: Poor integration of TB and HIV services results in fragmented care.
Recommendations:	• Integrate TB and HIV services to ensure seamless care. • Train healthcare workers on TB, HIV, and human rights to reduce stigma. • Phase out outdated treatments and adopt WHO-recommended regimens. • Strengthen strategic reserves for TB medicines to ensure consistent availability.

4. Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)

The problem	• Adolescents and Youth: Parental consent laws limit access to SRH services for young people. • Persons with Disabilities (PWDs): 80% of PWDs lack access to SRH services. • Key Populations: Police harassment and discrimination reduce HIV prevention service uptake.

| **Recommendations:** | • Address legal barriers, including parental consent requirements, to expand SRH access.
• Commit to youth-friendly SRH services and comprehensive sexuality education under ESA agreements.
• Develop SRH education guidelines for adolescents, PWDs, and key populations. |

5. Mental Health Service Delivery

| **The problem** | • Chronic Underfunding: Mental health receives only 0.01% of the health budget.
• Workforce Shortage: Kenya has just 1 psychiatrist per million people.
• Stigma and Criminalization: Criminalization of suicide and stigma hinder service delivery.
• Policy Gaps: Limited implementation of the Mental Health Policy, Action Plan, and Act. |

| **Recommendations:** | • Increase mental health funding to Ksh 150 per capita and establish budget tracking mechanisms.
• Fully implement the Mental Health Policy (2015–2030), Action Plan (2021–2025), and Mental Health Act (2023).
• Repeal Section 226 of the Penal Code to decriminalize attempted suicide.
• Expand mental health services to all counties, integrate substance use treatment, and upgrade Mathari Hospital into a national referral center. |

6. Regulatory Gaps in Digital Health

| **The problem** | • Lack of Regulation: Absence of a comprehensive digital health framework results in fragmented systems and poor data privacy.
• Legal Uncertainty: Invalidation of the Digital Health Act 2023 leaves the sector unregulated. |

| **Recommendation:** | • Enact the Digital Health Act 2023, ensuring public participation and alignment with Constitutional Petition E473 of 2023. |