

**Health Security in the State of Qatar:
Challenges, Initiatives, and National Achievements**



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Abstract:

development of an integrated and advanced healthcare system that aligns with the highest international standards. The system is built on advanced infrastructure and modern medical facilities, supported by significant investments and clear leadership directives. These efforts ensure the delivery of high-quality preventive and curative healthcare services for all residents, both citizens and expatriates. Notable achievements include the expansion of the healthcare network, the adoption of cutting-edge medical technologies, and the implementation of specialized national strategies such as the Qatar Cancer Plan 2023–2026, which enhances the speed of diagnosis and treatment. Additionally, all municipalities in Qatar have been designated as “Healthy Cities” by the World Health Organization, reaffirming the country’s regional and global leadership in public health. This progress reflects effective coordination among various governmental health bodies, sustained financial support, and a strong emphasis on prevention and health awareness. Together, these factors strengthen the sustainability of the healthcare system and improve the overall quality of life in Qatar.

Keywords :Health initiatives in Qatar, health security, national health strategy, health challenges, integrated healthcare system, epidemic prevention and preparedness, sustainable health development.

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Introduction

The State of Qatar has placed great emphasis on its health security through robust legal and practical systems that enhance its capacity to confront evolving health risks and challenges. The country remains firmly committed to epidemic prevention, preparedness, and response, in close alignment with the human development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030. This vision centers on the well-being of physically and mentally healthy citizens, driven by a multisectoral approach.

Over the past decade, Qatar's healthcare sector has experienced significant growth and unprecedented modernization, extending to emergency medical services. Notably, in 2019, the country inaugurated the largest trauma and emergency treatment center in the region. There has also been a strong focus on developing a highly skilled healthcare workforce and ensuring the provision of high-quality care to all residents. Qatar is a regional leader in advancing the "Health for All" vision, which emphasizes equitable access to quality healthcare services and the creation of an environment that promotes good health, including through sustainability-driven strategies.

Qatar is actively working to ensure the sustainability of its healthcare system and to meet the health needs of its population in accordance with the highest standards. It aims to achieve excellence and ensure the highest quality of life for its people. Among its healthcare objectives are increasing life expectancy to 82.6 years, reducing mortality from non-communicable diseases by 36%, and lowering infant mortality to 2 per 1,000 live births.

Significance of the Topic

Qatar's healthcare system has become distinguished and unique, gaining trust not only at the regional level but also globally. The healthcare system in Qatar is centered around the importance of universal health coverage for all members of society. It aims to improve the health of the Qatari population and meet the needs of citizens, residents, and visitors both quantitatively and qualitatively, while elevating healthcare services to global standards.

Study Objectives

This article seeks to address health security through the following objectives:

- Highlight the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of health security
- Identify the characteristics of Qatar's healthcare system
- Shed light on the various challenges facing the health sector in Qatar
- Present Qatar's national health strategies
- Examine Qatar's achievements and progress in the field of health security

Research Problem

Improving the health of Qatar's population, ensuring sustainability, meeting the population's health needs according to the highest standards, and achieving excellence to attain the highest possible quality of life all present significant challenges. Developing countries around the world struggle to change unhealthy habits associated with modern lifestyles. Qatar recognizes the magnitude of this challenge; however, it affirms through its clear objectives that success is achievable if a well-defined agenda and set of priorities focused on the health of all residents are placed at the forefront particularly within the framework of achieving health security and integrated healthcare.

Based on the above, the research problem can be formulated in the following central question:

How has Qatar addressed the various challenges in the field of health security?

This central question includes the following sub-questions:

- What are the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of health security?
- What are the characteristics of Qatar's healthcare system?
- What are the various challenges facing the health sector in Qatar?
- What is the content of Qatar's national health strategies?
- What are Qatar's achievements and accomplishments in the field of health security?

Research Scope

In recent years, the State of Qatar has succeeded in building a world-class public healthcare system, thanks to its multisectoral approach to health and well-being. The country has invested significantly in promoting the health and well-being of its population and ensuring sustainability in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030.

This research paper will be limited to examining the foundations of health security in Qatar. It adopts a research framework that addresses the concept of health security, outlines the various health challenges faced by the country, and highlights Qatar's roles and efforts in light of emerging global trends in health security. These efforts have led to notable achievements and progress, granting Qatar distinction and excellence in the field of health security and healthcare.

1. Health Security A Conceptual Perspective

a. The Concept of Health Security

The term "health security" first appeared in France in 1992. It was coined by the Ministry of Health during the reform of the blood transfusion system,

prompted by the tragic contaminated blood scandal. The phrase was quickly adopted, and at the end of the parliamentary debate, an evening newspaper headline read: "Health Security Law." The reform came to be known under the concept of health security, which was embraced by public discourse. It marked a significant success, as the term—previously unfamiliar became one of the three priorities proposed at the National Health Conference three years later. (Didier, <https://tinyurl.com/5a59332n>)

Health security is regarded as a term or framework addressing public health issues, involving the global responsibility of governments to protect the health of their populations against external health threats, such as pandemics.

The concept of "health security" or "health sovereignty" entered international discourse officially in 1994, when human security was broadly defined to encompass key categories: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Despite its widespread use, the definition and scope of health security have not been clearly or consistently developed (Al-Harami, <https://tinyurl.com/3453a5m5>)

The term health security generally refers to all policies aimed at reducing therapeutic risks to individuals. Initially, these risks were associated with treatment options, prevention, diagnosis, and care, as well as the use of health goods and products. However, the concept has gradually expanded to also include broader social issues such as working conditions and environmental factors. (Geoconfluences, <https://tinyurl.com/5n7m5v4u>)

The World Health Organization defines global health security as "the activities required, both proactive and reactive, to minimize the danger and impact of acute public health events that endanger the collective health of populations living across geographical regions and international boundaries." This definition is normative it tells us how global health security should be carried out. However, it does not specify how the "activities" should be implemented or what exactly must be done to "minimize" the risks and impacts of public health events across regions and borders. (Davis, Kirk, <https://tinyurl.com/4tp3afz4>)

b .The Importance of Health Security

In the 21st century, health security has undergone a significant transformation in the history of public health. The field has witnessed major developments, marked by the increasing risks of disease outbreaks, epidemics, industrial accidents, natural disasters, and other health emergencies, all of which can rapidly evolve into global security threats.

As new health security challenges have emerged driven by increased vulnerability to global infectious diseases there has been a growing need for global

commitment and collaboration in public health. Diseases, pandemics, and health emergencies have become an increasing concern for global policymakers and governments due to their severe consequences for population health, their disruption of social life, and their negative impacts on economic activity and other development sectors such as tourism, education, and transportation. (Al-Harami, <https://tinyurl.com/3453a5m5>)

In an era of globalization, trade, and travel which all heighten the risk of disease spread—new infectious diseases have emerged and spread rapidly. Added to this are drug-resistant pathogens, potential accidental or intentional release of dangerous biological agents, and the misuse or theft of such agents.

Furthermore, climate and environmental changes, along with the spread of epidemics and diseases, rising conflicts, and wars, have all contributed to worsening economic conditions in many countries. These challenges increase the risk of crises and disasters, such as desertification, wildfires, water scarcity, famine, and poverty. The resulting impact on health, social stability, and humanitarian conditions drives growing trends in migration, displacement, and asylum seeking.

Such crises exert tremendous pressure on healthcare systems many of which already suffer from limited resources making them ill-equipped to combat infectious diseases and epidemics. This also worsens the ability to treat chronic illnesses and respond to emergencies, especially in countries experiencing internal conflict or economic hardship.

Strong and resilient healthcare systems capable of managing chronic diseases are also better equipped to handle infectious diseases, thus achieving the desired level of health security. The Egyptian health initiatives, this year's Hajj season, Expo 2020, and other distinguished Arab experiences are clear examples of this capacity.

With advancements in technology and modern diagnostic and early treatment tools, the adoption of sound health policies becomes essential. Governments and decision-makers must empower communities to take control of their health, improve and protect it, and implement strategies, plans, and programs to support public health through awareness, education, and health literacy. This also requires mobilizing national resources to improve living and working environments, as well as promote healthier lifestyles and diets.

Additionally, there is a critical need to establish and enhance early warning platforms, surveillance, and disease-tracking systems, as well as health monitoring and control centers at border crossings, airports, ports, mass gatherings, and refugee and migration centers. Health systems must be supported with sufficient infrastructure, equipment, and well-trained human resources from accredited medical and training institutions. These systems must be well-equipped for protection—especially in emergency, triage, and evacuation units—and should

include home care, medical isolation, and a fully integrated and technologically connected network of health facilities. A highly equipped laboratory system with qualified personnel is also essential to ensure accurate and rapid diagnosis of epidemics. (Al-Mabrouk, <https://tinyurl.com/3mkkehc7>)

a. Qatar's Population

According to data from the Planning and Statistics Authority, Qatar's population increased by 6.08% year-on-year by the end of February 2023. The population reached 2.983 million compared to 2.812 million at the end of February 2022. As of the end of February 2023, there were approximately 2.147 million males and 835,513 females. On a monthly basis, the population grew by 0.95%, up from 2.955 million in January 2022. These figures represent individuals of all age groups Qataris and non-Qataris who were within Qatar's borders on February 28, 2023.⁴ The data does not include Qataris outside the country at the time of the census or non-Qataris holding residence permits who were abroad. (Al Sharq <https://tinyurl.com/ncsf22cb>)

Additional relevant statistics include: (Visit Qatar, <https://tinyurl.com/23btjegy>)

- Qatar is home to over 100 nationalities.
- The literacy rate in the country is approximately 97%.
- Qatar has the lowest percentage of females globally, with women comprising only 24.7% of the total population roughly one woman for every three men. This is largely due to the high number of male migrant workers.
- Qatar has one of the most urbanized populations in the world, with 99.2% of residents living in urban areas.

b. Characteristics of the Healthcare Sector in Qatar

In recent years, Qatar has experienced a qualitative leap in its healthcare infrastructure, marked by a significant increase in public health facilities and skilled medical and paramedical staff. By the end of 2023, the number of public hospitals and long-term care facilities reached 19. Public health centers, including those managed by the Primary Health Care Corporation and the Qatar Red Crescent under an agreement with the Ministry of Public Health, grew to 35 centers across the country, six of which are dedicated to wellness and health. The total number of healthcare workers in the public sector reached 29,960. (Qatar News Agency, <https://tinyurl.com/z6z4sfve>)

By the end of 2022, the number of public hospitals had increased to 16, up from 6 in 2011, the year the first National Health Strategy was launched. New facilities were also opened under Hamad Medical Corporation, including the Al Maha Specialized Pediatric Care Center, a permanent intensive care unit, a

physiotherapy and orthopedics unit, a smoking cessation clinic, an advanced wound care department, and a 60% expansion of the women's health assessment zone in the Emergency Department. Additionally, the pediatric speech therapy unit at the Qatar Rehabilitation Institute added 12 treatment rooms.

The number of public health centers increased to 33 in 2023, compared to 24 in 2011.

The private healthcare sector also witnessed significant growth. By the end of 2022, it included 10 hospitals, 19 day surgery centers, 390 general and specialized clinics (including dental centers), and 31 diagnostic facilities, comprising medical laboratories, radiology centers, and dental labs.

The combined workforce in both public and private healthcare sectors rose to 46,371 in 2023, compared to 20,682 in 2011.

In 2022, Qatar became the first country where all municipalities were recognized as "Healthy Cities" by the World Health Organization. The Healthy Cities Program supports public health and well being through multi-sectoral collaboration to improve public health initiatives in daily living environments. (Saudi Press Agency, <https://tinyurl.com/2fj29m7x>)

The government has prioritized the health sector, allocating QAR 21.1 billion to it, which represents about 11% of total public expenditure.

The healthcare sector is expected to play a prominent role in Qatar's economic diversification strategy, with medical tourism becoming a key growth driver. Consequently, the healthcare market is projected to reach a value of \$12 billion by 2024.

This growth aligns with the Human Development Pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030 and reflects the country's commitment to the physical and mental health of both citizens and residents. It also involves developing healthcare services by investing in state-of-the-art infrastructure, facilities, and technologies.¹⁰

The Ministry of Public Health is implementing a strategic approach to delivering advanced healthcare services through innovative and modern digital health systems. These systems aim to meet the needs of patients, healthcare providers, regulators, and other stakeholders. The health initiative seeks to enhance the Ministry's capacity to monitor, manage, and respond to health challenges effectively, ensure the availability and quality of healthcare, and detect public health risk factors. (Invest Qatar, <https://tinyurl.com/4e3efjmk>)

3. Health Challenges in Qatar

The challenges in Qatar's health sector are diverse and fall into three categories: population health challenges, healthcare system challenges, and other

systemic challenges, as outlined below: (State of Qatar, Ministry of Public Health, 2028, p18)

a. Population Health Challenges

- 60% of all deaths in the population are caused by chronic diseases, especially heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.⁸
- 70% of Qataris are overweight.
- 43% of Qataris report low levels of physical activity.
- 88% of Qatari children suffer from dental cavities.
- 23% of deaths are caused by injuries.
- Tobacco use is reported in 31% of men, 1.5% of women, and 15% of children aged 13 to 15 years.¹

b. Healthcare System Challenges

- Responding to the growing demand for healthcare services.
- The need to maintain integration across healthcare institutions and service environments.
- Ensuring a sustainable healthcare workforce capable of meeting the high demand for services.
- Shifting the focus of healthcare services from treatment to prevention and health promotion.
- Enhancing the collection, analysis, and dissemination of health data.

c. Other Challenges

The Third National Health Strategy 2024–2030 Guide highlights ongoing challenges that have persisted since the Second National Health Strategy. These challenges are categorized into three key domains: population health, service delivery and patient experience, and the efficiency and resilience of the healthcare system. They represent core priorities for the upcoming strategy. (Al Sharq, <https://tinyurl.com/mv9du6wp>)

- The Major Challenge: Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

The greatest challenge remains the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which cause around 650 deaths per 100,000 people in Qatar—compared to 240 per 100,000 in well-functioning global health systems. Qatar faces high rates of obesity and diabetes, driven in part by unhealthy lifestyle choices. 44% of adults in the country are overweight. 22% of the population smokes. About 19% of NCD-

related deaths are due to diabetes complications, which is particularly high among the youth.

- The Challenge of Service Delivery

Another major challenge lies in service delivery and patient experience. There is a disproportionate focus on non-standardized curative care in hospitals, rather than preventable care in community and primary care settings. About 69% of patient visits that could be handled in primary care are instead made to specialized hospitals. This calls for a modernized, evidence-based approach to care delivery and patient pathway design. (Al Sharq, <https://tinyurl.com/mv9du6wp>)

- The Challenge of System Efficiency and Resilience

The third major challenge concerns the efficiency and resilience of the healthcare system. The health sector demonstrated flexibility and sustainability during critical times—such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022. Going forward, the focus should be on: System efficiency and digitization, Data availability, research and development, Upskilling the health workforce, coordinated system planning across public and private sectors

One of the barriers to an integrated system is the limited digitalization across the healthcare network. Additionally, the lack of clarity in roles, responsibilities, and authority delegation within the Ministry of Public Health presents another governance challenge. (<https://tinyurl.com/mv9du6wp>)

4. Health Security in Qatar: Programs and Initiatives

Qatar has endeavored to ensure health and well-being for all people of all ages by improving reproductive, maternal, and child health; ending major communicable diseases; reducing non communicable and environmental diseases; achieving universal health coverage; and ensuring access to safe, effective, and affordable medicines and vaccines for all.

Over the past five years, Qatar's healthcare policies have undergone tangible development, aimed at establishing an integrated healthcare system that delivers high-quality services through both public and private institutions. Building this system involved the implementation of several strategic initiatives, including: (State of Qatar, Planning and Statistics Authority, 2021, p. 45)

a. The National Primary Health Care Strategy (2013–2018):

This strategy aimed to establish a comprehensive, integrated, world-class healthcare service that is person-centered and works in partnership with individuals, families, and communities to improve their health and well-being. It was supported by the Continuous Care Strategy, which outlined practical steps to create an effective and efficient continuum of care system, emphasizing treatment at the appropriate level and environment of care.

b. The National Mental Health Strategy (2013–2018):

This strategy outlined a vision to establish an integrated mental health system supported by the Mental Health Law, which has since been approved and is now being implemented. It also involved organizing hospital services by setting clinical standards that define four levels of service complexity and organization.

c. The National Diabetes Strategy (2018–2022):

This strategy aimed to redesign the model for diabetes care and prevention, ensuring lifestyle counseling and educational services for individuals with diabetes and those at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. It also introduced a new care model for emergency and urgent care within the health system.

d. Review of the National Cancer Strategy (2011–2016):

This review, alongside the National Cancer Framework (2016–2022), aimed to establish national level objectives related to health education, early detection, treatment, and high-quality cancer services.

e. National Oral and Dental Health Strategy Roadmap:

Included a national oral health survey, recommendations for oral health improvement, and a scientific study on water fluoridation. Additionally, the Community Pharmacy Strategy (2011–2016) aimed to improve medication access through an integrated network of pharmacies.

f. Establishment of the Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners (QCHP):

A five-year strategic plan (2017–2022) was developed focusing on sustainable growth, excellence, quality, partnerships, engagement, and ensuring high-performance regulation. Licensing protocols and accreditation standards for healthcare facilities were introduced, along with the implementation of a national prescription system.

Expansion of Health Facilities:

New hospitals and health centers were opened, core clinical services were expanded or restructured, and the Health Facilities Master Plan (2013–2022) was developed, including a five-year action plan. A performance-based budgeting system was also introduced and is being rolled out in phases.

Private Sector Role:

The role of the private sector in delivering healthcare remains a significant area of opportunity and will be a key consideration in the future healthcare system.

National Committee for Research Ethics:

A sustainable model was implemented for Institutional Review Board (IRB) registration and ethical review of research, alongside the development of a national policy for genomic medicine.

These achievements have brought substantial benefits to Qatar's health system, with significant progress in implementing these key initiatives expected to continue throughout the strategic period.

TASMU Strategy:

As part of this strategy, several transport sector projects were identified and defined to support Sustainable Development Goal 3. The team began defining the scope of the crowd management and transport system project one of the supporting initiatives. The strategy and selected projects will continue to be reviewed to ensure alignment with national health goals. (State of Qatar, Planning and Statistics Authority, 2021, p. 45)

5. The National Health Strategy in Qatar (2024–2030)

a. Strategy Goals

The features of Qatar's Third National Health Strategy (2024–2030) aim to translate the national strategic outcomes related to a high quality of life, as outlined in the Third National Development Strategy (2024–2030), by launching a national plan for healthy lifestyles and a self-care plan. The strategy also includes implementing advanced disease surveillance systems. These efforts aim to: Increase life expectancy at birth from 80.3 to 82.6 years. Reduce infant mortality to 2 per 1,000 live births. Decrease mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes and heart disease, by 63%, reaching 416 deaths per 100,000 population.

The strategy also targets adult obesity, smoking prevalence, and insufficient physical activity. Currently, 79% of adult males and 70% of adult females engage in at least 150 minutes of physical activity weekly. Another goal is to reduce road traffic death rates from 7.8 to fewer than 4.9 per 100,000 population by adopting advanced technologies, increasing public awareness of traffic risks, preventing disasters, and ensuring rapid emergency response.

The strategy further aims to address key healthcare system challenges and priorities by enhancing public health, primary healthcare, and essential healthcare infrastructure, while also promoting science and innovation. It will tackle health determinants through a "health in all policies" approach, and continue building a robust, inclusive healthcare system that guarantees universal health coverage, in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030.

Importantly, the strategy will emphasize leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning via the "Qatar Health Information Exchange Platform" and

national digital solutions and patient applications. Digital health supports the delivery of preventive, personalized, and empowering care. These initiatives are crucial to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030, the Third National Development Strategy, and the National Health Strategy. Notably, Qatar has made significant progress in implementing innovative digital health solutions to improve healthcare delivery, including secure and standardized sharing of health information among healthcare providers through the Health Information Exchange Platform. (Al Sharq, <https://tinyurl.com/325vcen4>)

b. Strategic Pillars

The strategy identifies three key priority areas that the National Health Strategy 2024–2030 must address to meet the sector's challenges across the next six years: population health, service delivery, and health system efficiency. (Al Sharq, <https://tinyurl.com/mv9du6wp>)

Improving Population Health and Well being

This is the top priority, focusing on addressing unhealthy behaviors and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases. The strategy seeks to create a more health-aware population by promoting healthy lifestyle choices, empowering and supporting patients and caregivers, and proactively preventing and detecting diseases. Key interventions include immunization programs and early disease detection initiatives. It also emphasizes integrating population health and well-being into all non-health sector strategies to ensure coordination and comprehensiveness across sectors.

Excellence in Service Delivery

This second priority addresses challenges such as variability in care quality, high rates of repeat visits, and inconsistent patient care standards. Current care pathways lack integration between primary and secondary care. The strategy envisions updated and comprehensive models, pathways, and referral guidelines to ensure integrated care. Goals include: Excellence in community and primary care, ensuring high quality care and improving patient experiences. Excellence in secondary and specialized care, focusing on access, patient experience, and quality.

Efficiency and Resilience of the Health System

The third priority targets governance, system sustainability, digital transformation, data availability, research, innovation, skilled workforce development, and coordinated planning. Current challenges include: Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities in system governance. Insufficient and inconsistent health data and low user satisfaction. Limited research and innovation despite strong higher education infrastructure. A need to rebalance healthcare workforce skills and improve service productivity.

Future outcomes include: Transparent and accountable health system governance aligned with regulatory functions. A sustainable healthcare financing model aligned with strategic goals. An efficient digital health system to improve care delivery and patient experience. Data-driven decision-making through unified data sources and strong data governance. Excellence in health and innovation. A skilled, well incentivized workforce. Dynamic and coordinated system planning across stakeholders. Emergency preparedness through improved institutional knowledge, capacity, and systems for response. (<https://tinyurl.com/mv9du6wp>)

6. Health Security in Qatar Achievements and Gains

Qatar is the first country to receive recognition from the World Health Organization (WHO) for all its municipalities as "Healthy Cities." The country has earned a high ranking on the Universal Health Coverage Index, underscoring its firm commitment to providing access to quality healthcare, promoting community well-being, and protecting against public health crises.

Qatar's healthcare achievements received international acclaim in 2022. Five of its hospitals were ranked among the top 250 academic medical centers globally, and two were listed among the top 100 hospitals. Additionally, Qatar was elected to the WHO Executive Board for a three-year term and received the WHO World No Tobacco Day Award in 2022, reaffirming its dedication to global health.

Massive investments in healthcare, preparedness, and scientific approaches, along with comprehensive measures, enabled Qatar to maintain one of the lowest COVID-19 mortality rates globally, achieve high vaccination coverage, and contribute significantly to the global understanding of the pandemic. (Arab Hospital magazine, <https://tinyurl.com/mwjzsf2a>)

All Qatari municipalities were recognized by WHO as "Healthy Cities." Education City (Qatar Foundation) was designated a "Healthy Education City." Qatar University was named a "Healthy University." (the Arab-Hospital magazine <https://tinyurl.com/bde3sfhw>)

These investments have led to significant public health improvements, reflected in a rise in life expectancy to 80.3 years in 2021.

Qatar ranked first in the Health and Well being Indicator under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the Eastern Mediterranean Region in 2022.

Qatar is also the second country globally (after the U.S.) to receive national-level accreditation for public health services from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), alongside other high-level accreditations such as those awarded to Hamad Medical Corporation's hospital network and Sidra Medicine by the Joint Commission International (JCI).¹²

Five Qatari hospitals were ranked among the world's top 250 academic medical centers. The Primary Health Care Corporation received the Canadian Diamond-Level Accreditation, while the Qatar Red Crescent Society earned Canadian Platinum Accreditation for all four health centers it operates under an agreement with the Ministry of Public Health.

Hamad Medical Corporation's Ambulance Service has exceeded national response time targets for emergency calls for the 11th consecutive year. The goal, set in the first National Health Strategy, is to reach urban emergency sites within 10 minutes and rural sites within 15 minutes in at least 75% of cases.

Ehealth services have made Qatar's healthcare system more connected, enabling medical teams to access patient records across public healthcare facilities, offer telemedicine services, and deliver medications directly to patients' homes.

The Ministry of Public Health launched the updated Qatar National Formulary (QNF) via its website, offering a comprehensive, up to date national database of pharmaceutical information, drug registration status, regulations, and guidelines. The list includes over 4,000 officially registered drugs, with monthly updates.

The "Wathiq" Food Safety System was also launched to enhance food safety management and traceability across the entire supply chain. Additionally, Qatar established the Qatar Cancer Information Center, the national reference for cancer-related data, alongside other important initiatives in health information systems and health.

Qatar is a regional leader in guaranteeing the right to health. The country's permanent constitution explicitly affirms the state's commitment to public health and to providing disease and epidemic prevention and treatment services in accordance with the law.

The Ministry of Public Health has launched several key initiatives supporting the right to health, including the publication of the Patient Rights and Responsibilities Charter in eight languages for accessibility. The charter outlines patient rights and duties in clear and simple language, and all healthcare institutions are mandated to display and implement it.

In numbers, the year 2023 witnessed: Over 2.8 million outpatient visits to Hamad Medical Corporation. Over 1.3 million emergency department visits. More than 21.6 million laboratory tests. Over 60,000 surgical operations. More than 22,000 births. (Qatar News Agency <https://tinyurl.com/z6z4sfve>)

Qatar also prioritizes organ donation and transplantation. As of 2023, more than 530,000 individuals were registered as organ donors. That year, 82 kidney transplants, 11 liver transplants, and 3 lung transplants were performed.

In recognition of its healthcare system's advancement and strong support for the WHO, Qatar was elected on May 31, 2023, as Chair of the WHO Executive Board (153rd session) for one year. Furthermore, WHO designated three centers in Qatar as WHO Collaborating Centers: Department of Geriatrics and Long-Term Care, Hamad Medical Corporation – Collaborating Center for Healthy Ageing and Dementia (2023).

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Conclusion

The State of Qatar has made significant strides in the field of healthcare. Over the past few decades, our health system has undergone rapid and substantial improvements. In the past decade alone, the number of public hospitals has increased from five to thirteen, alongside the addition of six new primary healthcare centers.

Moreover, Qatar's investments have extended far beyond infrastructure and capacity building. The quality of care provided within our health system has improved markedly, with numerous international accreditations earned. Advanced treatment technologies and highly developed care systems have also been widely adopted.

Several health strategies have been developed in alignment with the National Health Strategy 2024–2030. These include strategies for mental health, cancer control, oral and dental health, autism, and public health. Each of these strategies offers a comprehensive framework to guide the continued advancement of Qatar's healthcare system.

Qatar has also placed great emphasis on its health security through legal and operational systems and legislation that enhance its capacity to respond to changing health risks and emergencies. The country has consistently demonstrated a firm commitment to the prevention, preparedness, and response to epidemics an approach that closely aligns with the human development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030.

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