

MYANMAR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

*M*yanmar health care system evolves with changing political and administrative system and relative roles played by the key providers are also changing although the Ministry of Health remains the major provider of comprehensive health care. It has a pluralistic mix of public and private system both in the financing and provision. Health care is organized and provided both by public and private providers.

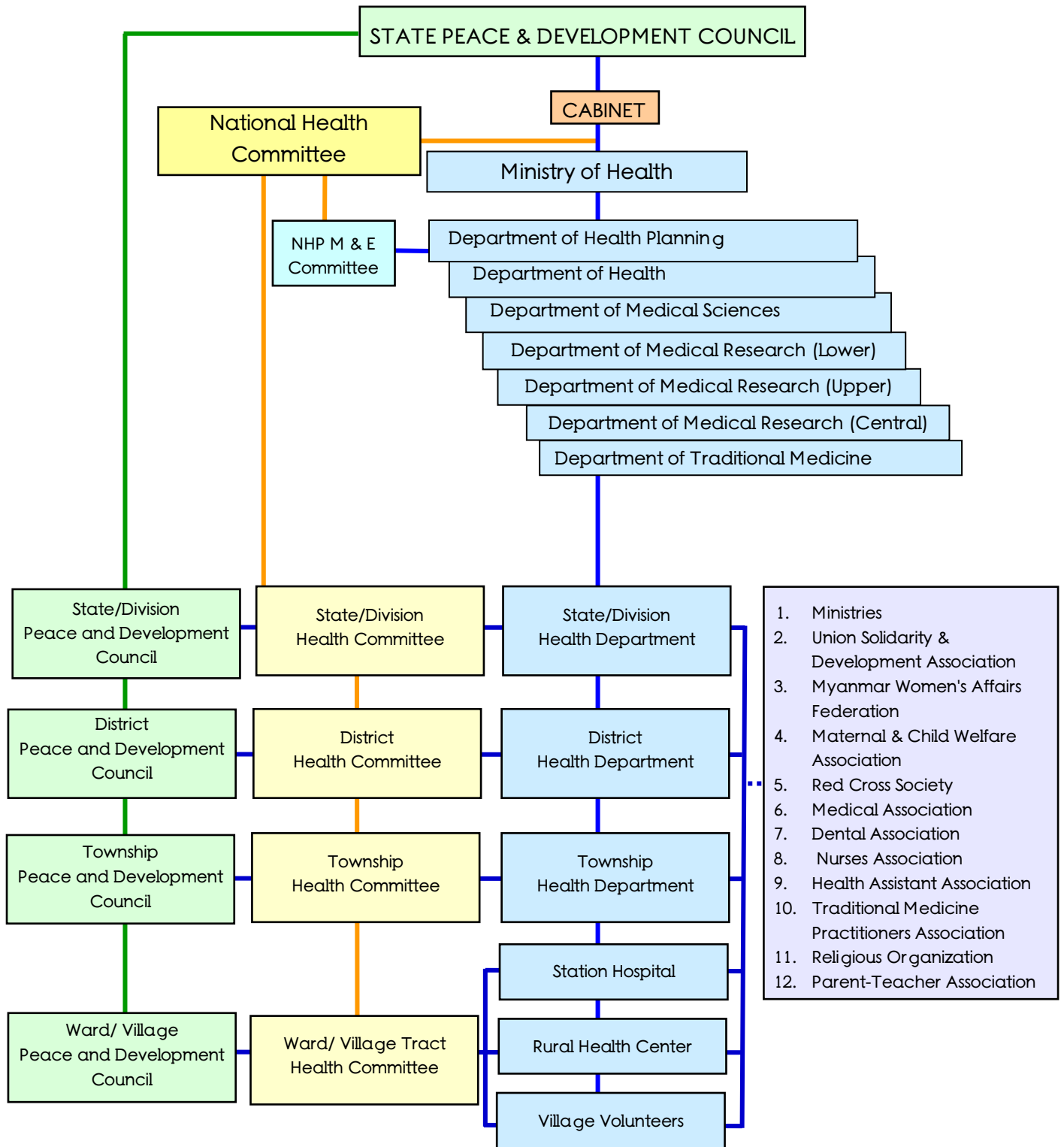
Ministry of Health is the main organization of health care provision. Department of Health, one of 7 departments under the Ministry of Health, plays a major role in providing comprehensive health care through out the country including remote and hard to reach border areas. Some ministries are also providing health care, mainly curative, for their employees and their families. They include Ministries of Defense, Railways, Mines, Industry I, Industry II, Energy, Home and Transport. Ministry of Labour has set up two general hospitals, one in Yangon and the other in Mandalay, and one TB hospital in Hlaingtharyar (Yangon) to render services to those entitled under the social security scheme. Ministry of Industry (I) is running a Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory and producing medicines and therapeutic agents to meet the domestic needs.

The private, for profit, sector is mainly providing ambulatory care though some providing institutional care has developed in Yangon, Mandalay and some large cities in recent years. Funding and provision of care is fragmented. They are regulated in conformity with the provisions of the law relating to Private Health Care Services. General Practitioners' Section of the Myanmar Medical Association with its branches in townships provide the private practitioners the opportunities to update and exchange their knowledge and experiences by holding seminars, talks and symposia on currently emerging issues and updated diagnostic and therapeutic measures. The Medical Association and its branches also provide a link between them and their counterparts in public sector so that private practitioners can also participate in public health care activities.

One unique and important feature of Myanmar health system is the existence of traditional medicine along with allopathic medicine. Traditional medicine has been in existence since time immemorial and except for its waning period during colonial administration, when allopathic medical practices had been introduced and flourishing, it is well accepted and utilized by the people through out the history. With encouragement of the State scientific ways of assessing the efficacy of therapeutic agents, nurturing of famous and rare medicinal plants, exploring, sustaining and propagation of treatises and practices can be accomplished. There are a total of 14 traditional hospitals run by the State in the country. Traditional medical practitioners have been trained at an Institute of Traditional Medicine and with the establishment of a new University of Traditional Medicine conferring a bachelor degree more competent practitioners can now be trained and utilized. There are quite a number of private traditional practitioners and they are licensed and regulated in accordance with the provisions of related laws.

In line with the National Health Policy NGOs such as Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Red Cross Society are also taking some share of service provision and their roles are also becoming important as the needs for collaboration in health become more prominent. Sectoral collaboration and community participation is strong in Myanmar health system thanks to the establishment of the National Health Committee in 1989. Recognizing the growing importance of the needs to involve all relevant sectors at all administrative levels and to mobilize the community more effectively in health activities health committees have been established in various administrative levels down to the wards and village tracts. These committees at each level are headed by the chairman or responsible person of the organs of power concern and include heads of related government departments and representatives from the social organizations as members. Heads of the health departments are designated as secretaries of the committees.

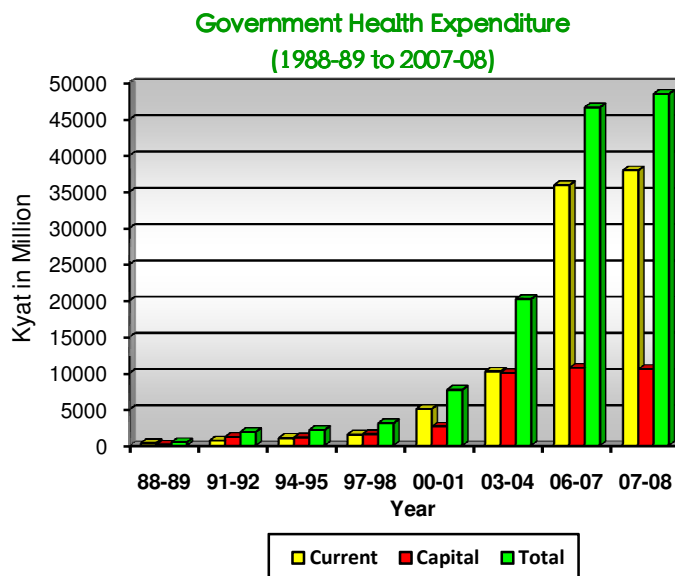
Health Service Delivery System



Financing Health

The major sources of finance for health are the government and the private households.

Government has increased health spending on both current and capital yearly. Total government health expenditure increased from kyats 464.1million in 1988-89 to kyats 48489.6 million in 2007-2008.



Governmental Health Expenditures by Functions (1998-2001)

Million Kyats

Functions (%)	1998	1999	2000	2001
Services of Curative & Rehabilitative Care	698.409 (22.34)	1001.226 (23.17)	2581.648 (33.58)	2724.353 (29.57)
Ancillary Services to Medical Care	6.186 (0.2)	5.389 (0.12)	14.448 (0.19)	15.519 (0.17)
Medical Goods Dispensed to Patients	315.665 (10.09)	377.609 (8.74)	427.884 (5.57)	596.272 (6.47)
Prevention & Public Health Services	240.506 (7.69)	266.536 (6.17)	860.502 (11.19)	870.536 (9.45)
Health Administration & Insurance	120.975 (3.87)	222.859 (5.16)	379.103 (4.93)	346.196 (3.76)
<i>Not Specified in Kind</i>	357.072 (11.42)	368.399 (8.52)	578.167 (7.52)	777.898 (8.44)
Health Related Functions*	1388.087 (44.39)	2079.382 (48.12)	2846.448 (37.02)	3881.726 (42.14)
Total Health Expenditure	3126.9 (100)	4321.4 (100)	7688.2 (100)	9212.5 (100)

*Health related functions include training and production of human resources for health and health research.

Social Health Insurance

Social security scheme was implemented in accordance with 1954 Social Security Act by the Ministry of Labour. According to the law factories, workshops and enterprises that have over 5 employees whether State owned, private, foreign or joint ventures, must provide the employees with social security coverage. The contribution is tri-partite with 2.5% by the employer 1.5% by the employee of the designated rate while the government contribution is in the form of capital investment. Insured workers under the scheme are provided free medical treatment, cash benefits and occupational injury benefit. One 250-bedded Workers' Hospital in Yangon, one 150-bedded Workers' Hospital in Mandalay and one 100-bedded TB Hospital in Hlaingtharyar has been established along with 89 dispensaries and 2 mobile medical units.