

WUENIC Talking Points: South Africa

Revision Year: 2025

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South Africa in the 'Africa' region



Overview

- None of the 12 childhood vaccines tracked for South Africa achieved coverage of 90% or higher in 2025.
- Coverage of the first dose of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis-containing vaccine (DTP1) declined from 76% in 2024 to 67% in 2025, coverage of the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine (DTP3) declined from 74% in 2024 to 65% in 2025, and coverage of the first dose of the measles-containing vaccine (MCV1) declined from 76% in 2024 to 66% in 2025.
- In 2025, the number of zero-dose children for DTP in South Africa (380,000) was approximately 251% higher than the annual number proposed to achieve the IA2030 target of halving zero-dose children for DTP by 2030 (108,000), based on a linear trajectory of decline.

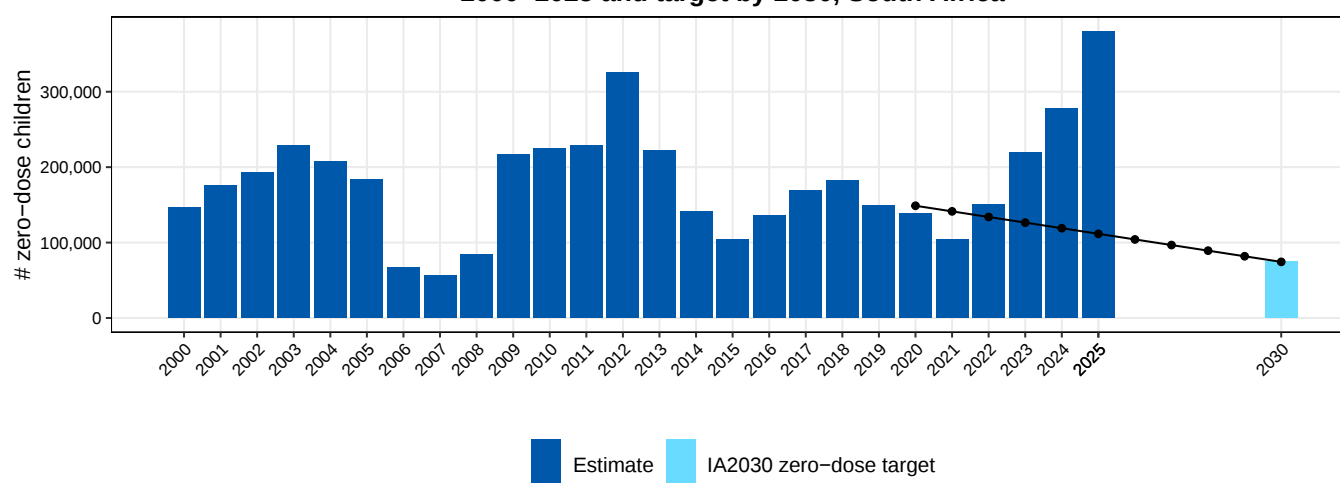
Vaccine coverage (%), South Africa, 2000–2025

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
BCG	89	86	84	81	78	76	79	79	84	82	81	84	86	88	93	83	79	75	70	84	86	86	84	79	74	66
DTP1	85	82	80	77	80	83	94	95	93	81	80	80	72	81	88	91	88	85	84	87	88	91	87	81	76	67
DTP3	73	71	70	69	74	81	84	85	82	81	77	75	71	81	85	85	85	84	82	85	84	86	85	79	74	65
Hib3	73	71	70	69	75	82	84	84	80	77	72	71	69	79	85	85	85	84	82	85	84	86	85	79	74	65
HepB3	73	72	72	71	76	79	83	83	76	74	71	76	70	73	85	85	85	84	82	85	84	86	85	79	74	65
PCVC										10	58	62	75	77	85	85	82	79	83	86	83	87	89	84	82	65
RotaC										17	60	67	73	74	81	84	83	81	80	83	83	85	83	78	73	65
IPV1																91	88	85	84	87	88	86	87	81	76	67
IPVC																						86	85	79	74	64
MCV1	72	69	65	62	63	64	69	68	73	77	72	77	79	78	84	86	84	81	81	83	84	87	86	80	76	66
RCV1																										66
MCV2	62	54	46	52	51	48	53	49	54	63	55	54	53	50	55	59	69	78	75	79	76	82	87	84	82	72
HPVc															66	61	61	56	43	43		37	41	78	79	79



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Estimated number of zero-dose children, 2000–2025 and target by 2030, South Africa

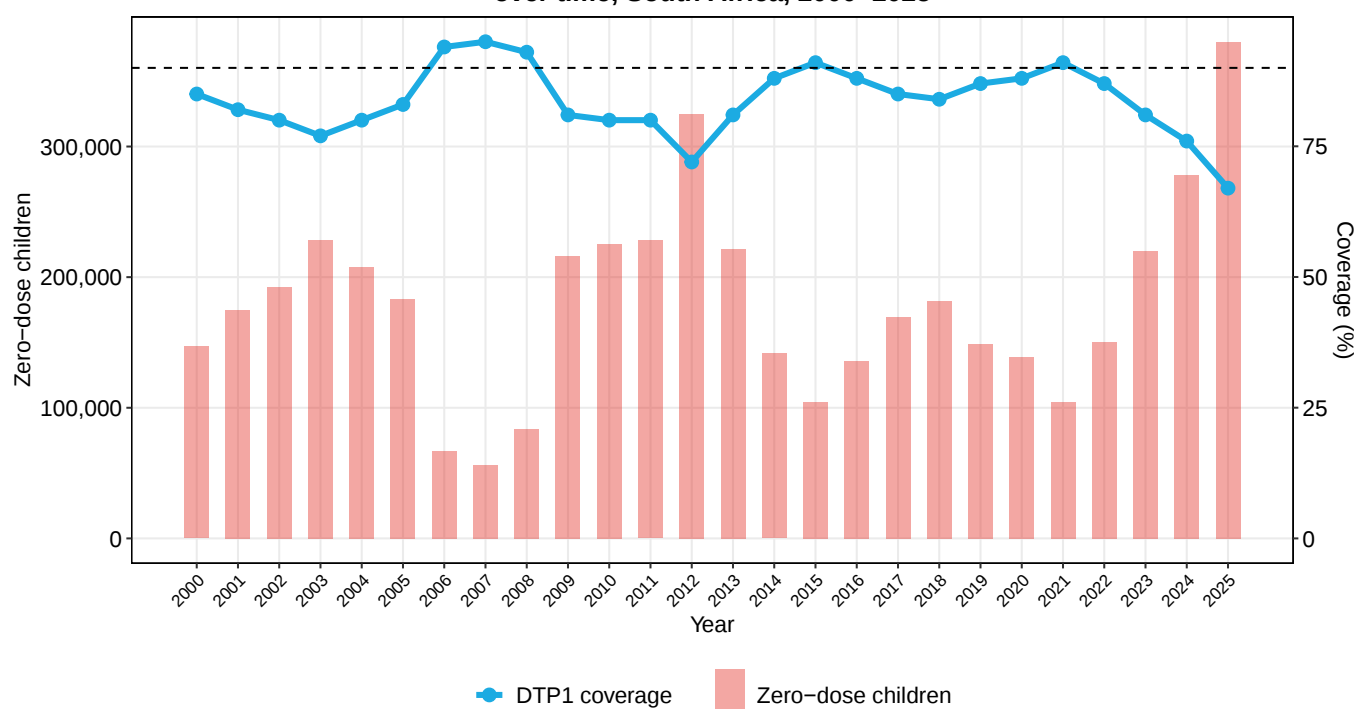


Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
 Note: The Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) calls on all countries to reduce the number of zero-dose children in 2019 in half by 2030.
 Dark blue bars are the estimated number of zero-dose children in 2000–2025, light blue bar is the target number of zero-dose children by 2030.
 The line and points show the yearly progress and trajectory to meet the target by 2030, based on a linear decline.

DTP1: Reaching zero-dose children

- Coverage of DTP1 stood at 67% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (87%) and lower than in 2024 (76%).
- The percentage of zero-dose children was 251 percentage points higher than the IA2030 target in 2025. There were approximately 380,000 zero-dose children in 2025, more than the 149,000 in 2019 and more than the 278,000 in 2024.
- Coverage of DTP1 in South Africa (67%) was lower than the Eastern and Southern Africa regional average of 85% in 2025.
- DTP1-to-DTP3 dropout in 2025 was 3%, 1 percentage point higher than in 2019 (2%). Low DTP dropout rates imply good ability to provide a complete vaccine series early in life.

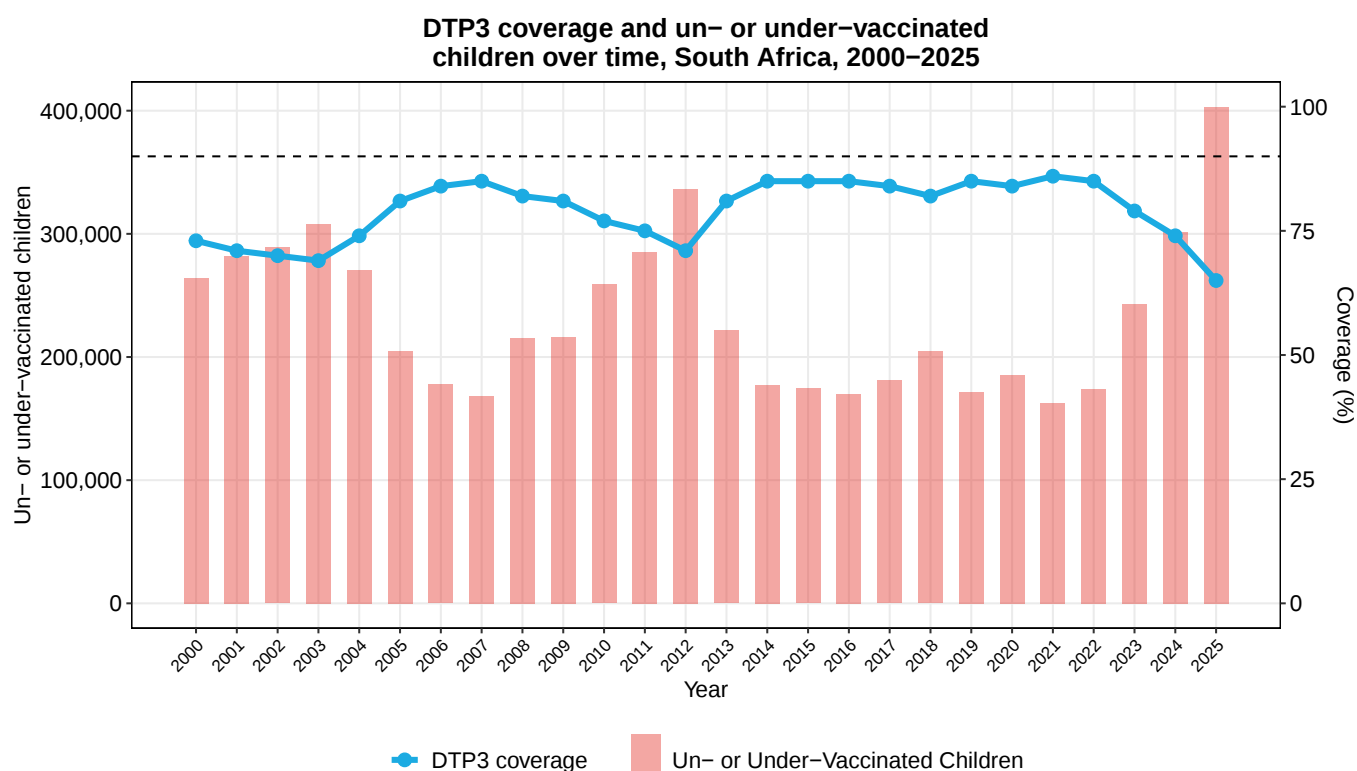
DTP1 coverage and zero-dose children over time, South Africa, 2000–2025



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

DTP3: A marker of routine immunization service delivery to children

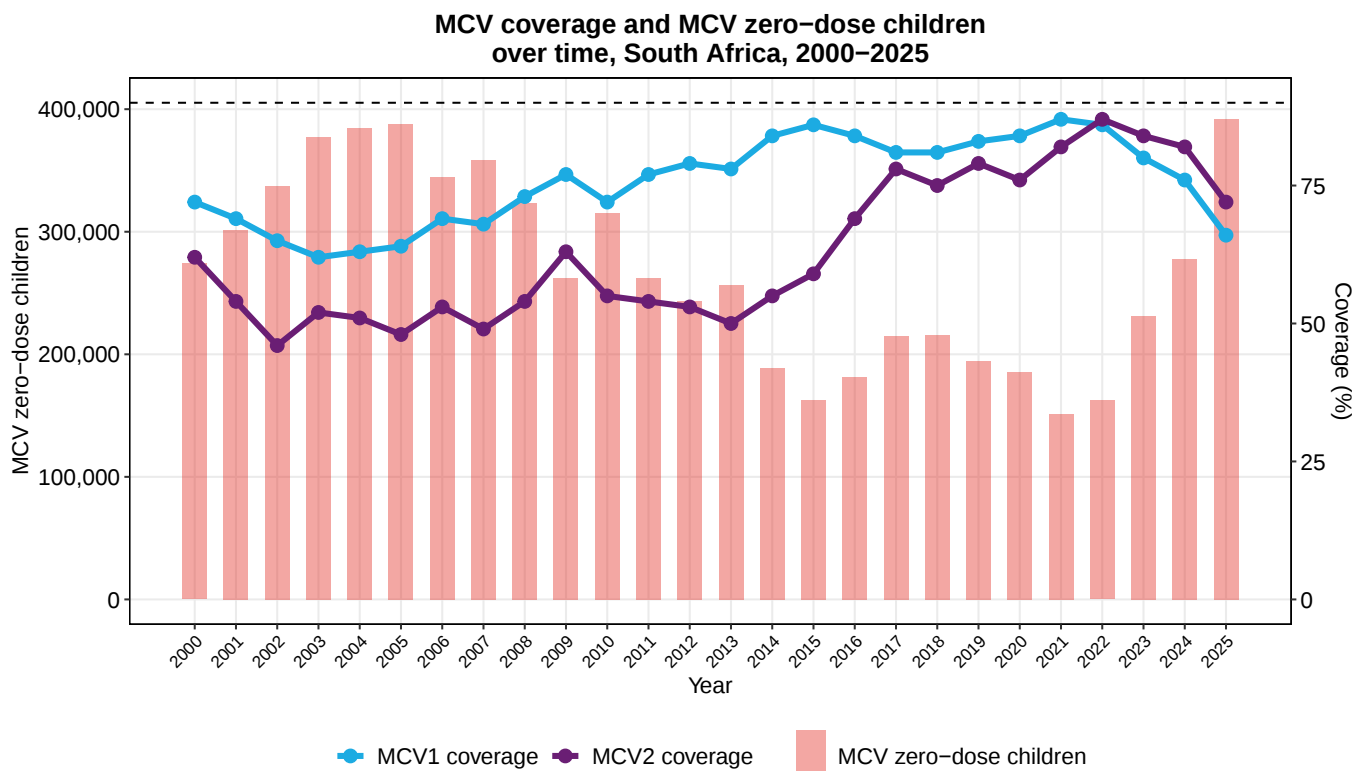
- Coverage of DTP3 stood at 65% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (85%) and lower than in 2024 (74%).
- The number of children vaccinated with DTP3 decreased from 973,000 in 2019 to 749,000 in 2025.
- In 2025, there were 403,000 children un- or under-vaccinated in South Africa.
- In 2025, 3% of children who received DTP1 did not receive DTP3. This 3% dropout rate was 1 percentage points higher than in 2019 (2%) and the same as the 2024 dropout rate (3%).
- Coverage of DTP3 in South Africa (65%) was lower than the Eastern and Southern Africa regional average of 80% in 2025.



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

MCV: Canary in the coal mine

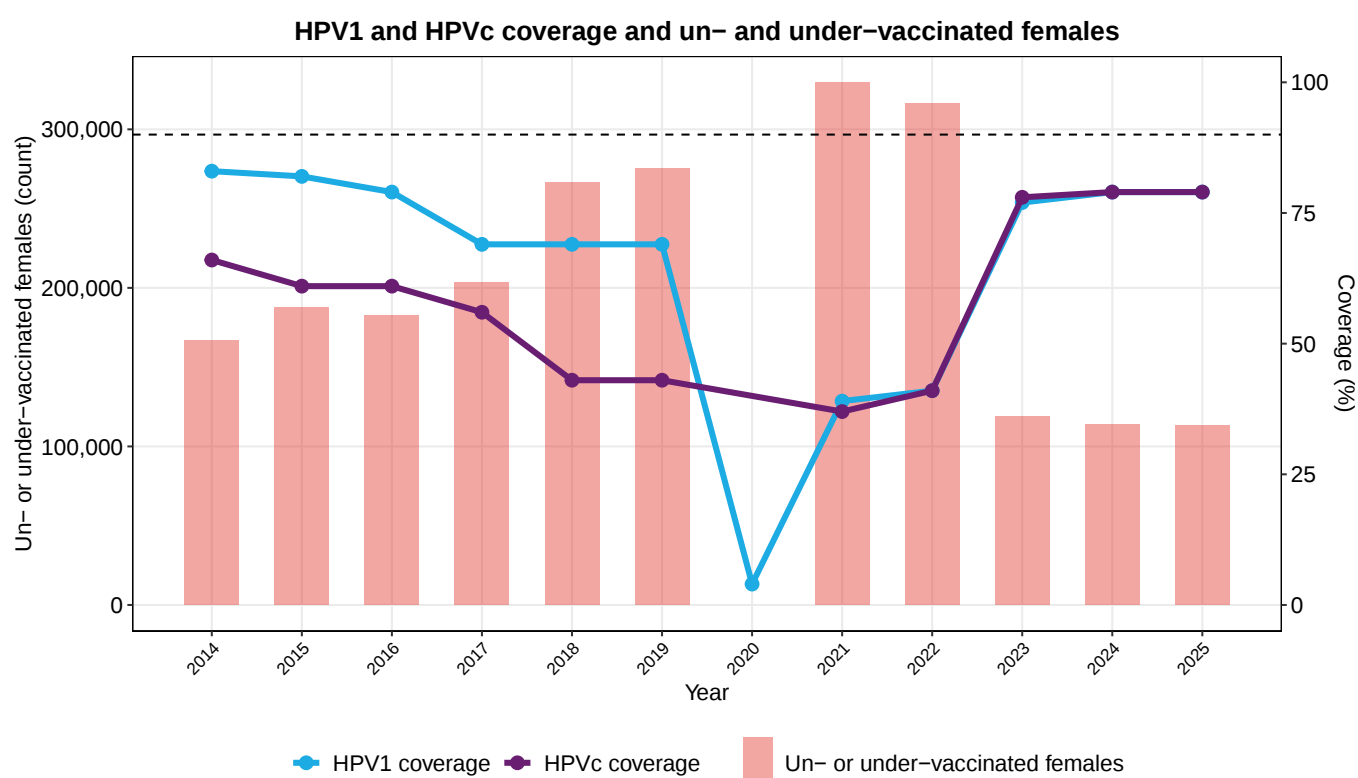
- Coverage of MCV1 stood at 66% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (83%) and lower than in 2024 (76%).
- Coverage of the second dose of the measles-containing vaccine (MCV2) decreased from 79% in 2019 to 72% in 2025. This leaves 392,000 children without any protection against measles and another -68,000 with only partial protection.
- In 2025, 1% of children who received DTP1 did not receive MCV1. This 1% dropout rate was 4 percentage points lower than in 2019 (5%) but 1 percentage points higher than the 2024 dropout rate (0%).
- South Africa has achieved MCV1 coverage above 80% over all of the last 3 years.
- Coverage of MCV1 in South Africa (66%) was lower than the Eastern and Southern Africa regional average of 77% in 2025.



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

HPV

- Programme coverage of HPV1 among females remained constant at 79% between 2024 and 2025, and coverage of the last dose (HPVc) also remained constant at 79%.
- HPVc coverage remains well below the IA2030 target of 90%.
- In 2025, approximately 113,000 females in South Africa did not receive any HPV vaccination (unvaccinated).
- Among Eastern and Southern Africa region peers, South Africa ranked 5 out of 17 countries in HPVc coverage in 2025.



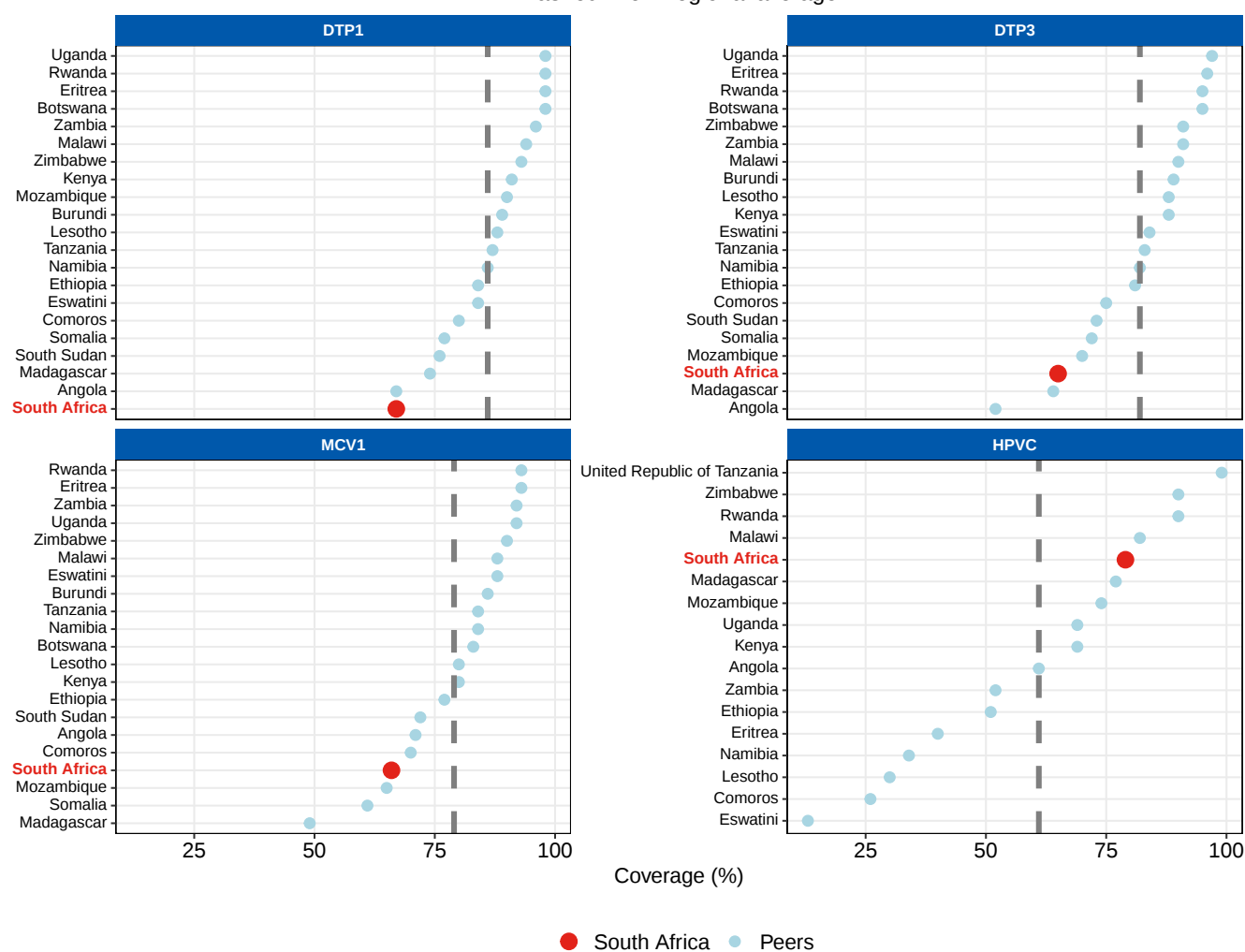
Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Regional Comparison

The chart below shows how South Africa compares to other countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region on DTP1, DTP3, MCV1, and HPVc coverage in 2025. The dashed line represents the regional average for each vaccine.

Coverage comparison: South Africa vs. ESAR peers, 2025

Dashed line = regional average



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Additional Vaccines

- Coverage of BCG stood at 66% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (84%) and lower than in 2024 (74%).
- Coverage of HepB3 stood at 65% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (85%) and lower than in 2024 (74%).
- Coverage of Hib3 stood at 65% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (85%) and lower than in 2024 (74%).
- Coverage of IPV1 stood at 67% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (87%) and lower than in 2024 (76%).
- Coverage of PCVC stood at 65% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (86%) and lower than in 2024 (82%).
- Coverage of RotaC stood at 65% in 2025. This is lower than in 2019 (83%) and lower than in 2024 (73%).

Additional vaccine coverage (%), South Africa, 2000–2025

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
BCG	89	86	84	81	78	76	79	79	84	82	81	84	86	88	93	83	79	75	70	84	86	86	84	79	74	66
HepB3	73	72	72	71	76	79	83	83	76	74	71	76	70	73	85	85	85	84	82	85	84	86	85	79	74	65
Hib3	73	71	70	69	75	82	84	84	80	77	72	71	69	79	85	85	85	84	82	85	84	86	85	79	74	65
IPV1																91	88	85	84	87	88	86	87	81	76	67
PCVC									10	58	62	75	77	85	85	82	79	83	86	83	87	89	84	82	65	
RotaC									17	60	67	73	74	81	84	83	81	80	83	83	85	83	78	73	65	



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Appendix

WHO/UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage (WUENIC)

Each year, WHO and UNICEF review national immunization data from Member States, including administrative and official coverage, survey estimates and contextual information, and use rules-based data triangulation approach to assess coverage. Estimates are produced independently, without borrowing data from other countries, and are not based on ad hoc adjustments. In some cases, they rely on a single source, typically nationally reported coverage. When data for a specific country-vaccine-year are unavailable, values from adjacent years are interpolated or extrapolated, and conflicting sources are assessed to determine the most reliable estimate, considering potential biases and expert opinion.

Methods:

- [Burton et al. 2009. WHO and UNICEF estimates of national infant immunization coverage: methods and processes](#)
- [Burton et al. 2012. A formal representation of the WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage: a computational logic approach](#)
- [Brown et al. 2013. An introduction to the grade of confidence used to characterize uncertainty around the WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage](#)

These talking points present the latest WUENIC estimates (published 15 July 2026).

Definitions of immunization terms:

- Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG): vaccine against tuberculosis
- Hepatitis B birth dose, given within 24 hours after birth (HepBB)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine, first dose (DTP1) and third dose (DTP3)
- Hepatitis B vaccine, third dose (HepB3)
- Haemophilus influenzae type B vaccine, third dose (Hib3)
- Inactivated polio vaccine, first dose (IPV1) and last dose (IPVC)
- Measles containing vaccine, first dose (MCV1) and second dose (MCV2)
- Rotavirus vaccine, last dose (RotaC)
- Pneumococcal vaccine, last dose (PCV)
- Yellow Fever vaccine (YFV)
- Meningococcal A vaccine (MengA)
- Human Papillomavirus vaccine, first dose (HPV1) and last dose (HPVc)

Additional resources: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/immunization/>