South Africa's laboratory medicine sector scales following hospital infrastructure investment

The healthcare providers market is predicted to grow to US$ 48.7 million by 2029, growing at a projected 3.8% CAGR.



JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, September 22, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- South Africa operates one of Africa's largest and most sophisticated laboratory networks, with hospital infrastructure expansion accelerating across public and private sectors to meet rising demand for faster, more accurate diagnostic services. Concurrent public and private hospital expansion (a US$200 million, 488-bed tertiary hospital in Limpopo , a 140-bed private hospital in the Western Cape , and 11 major public-hospital bids across multiple provinces) is reinforcing the infrastructure scale-up that underpins demand for laboratory automation and advanced diagnostics. Automation, advanced diagnostic platforms and point-of-care solutions are moving from pilot projects to core capital expenditure as hospital networks scale capacity and decentralise testing closer to patients.

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>
> *Prof Koleka Mlisana, Chief Executive Officer of the NHLS*

According to a 2025 GlobalData/MarketLine industry profile, the South African healthcare providers market is valued at US$40.3 million in 2024, with 4.6% CAGR over 2019–2024 and a projected 3.8% CAGR to US$48.7 million by 2029, providing a sourced anchor for sustained, multi-year investment rather than a one-off spend cycle. This growth is unfolding against a shifting regulatory backdrop, including a May 2026 Constitutional Court ruling affecting the NHI Act's Certificate of Need provisions.



World Health Expo (WHX) 2026 in Johannesburg brings laboratory medicine leaders, hospital infrastructure executives, procurement specialists and healthcare investors together at the Gallagher Convention Centre from 6–8 October. Through its dedicated Laboratory Zone and the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)-partnered Lab Leadership Indaba, the WHX brings together laboratory medicine leaders, hospital infrastructure decision-makers, procurement specialists, suppliers and investors evaluating the technologies, partnerships and investment opportunities shaping the sector's next phase of growth. Formerly Africa Health and now part of the global WHX portfolio, the expo returns to Johannesburg after two editions in Cape Town.

"Demand for laboratory services in South Africa is outpacing historical baselines, driven by hospital network expansion, chronic disease burden and the need for faster, more accurate turnaround times," said Prof Koleka Mlisana, Chief Executive Officer of the NHLS. "Laboratory capacity is no longer a back-office function; it is central to clinical decision-making, patient flow and hospital throughput. As networks scale, the requirement for automation, integrated information systems and point-of-care platforms becomes a strategic imperative, not an optional upgrade."

The Laboratory Zone at WHX is dedicated to lab automation, diagnostics and point-of-care suppliers, creating a convergence point for suppliers, procurement specialists and investors evaluating market entry or expansion. Across the wider WHX exhibition, more than 10,000 attendees and 600 exhibitors from 60+ countries, across 15,000 net sqm of exhibition space with 13 country pavilions will bring together suppliers and healthcare decision-makers from across the sector.

"The market signals are clear: investment is flowing into laboratory and diagnostics infrastructure because it delivers proven clinical and operational value," said Tom Coleman, Portfolio Director – Healthcare, inD, organiser of WHX. "Suppliers and investors are evaluating market entry and expansion based on demonstrated demand, hospital network growth, and the need for faster, decentralised testing, not policy speculation. WHX is where these conversations become procurement decisions and partnership agreements."

The WHX portfolio includes three key healthcare events in Africa, held in Nairobi, Lagos and Johannesburg, forming a unified platform that connects global brands with regional distributors.

WHX also sits alongside major continental health convenings, including the Africa Health ExCon (AHEC) in Egypt and the Africa CDC's Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA), creating a complementary ecosystem where policy, procurement and commercial capability reinforce one another.

WHX 2026 in Johannesburg takes place from 6–8 October at Gallagher Convention Centre. Healthcare professionals and industry stakeholders can register to attend at: https://www.worldhealthexpo.com/events/healthcare/johannesburg/attend/registration-lp/

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