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Using political leadership to overcome the increase and effects of HIV: The case of South Africa's investment to HIV

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Since the discovery of the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, which emanates from the human immunodeficiency virus, South Africa is one of the highly impacted countries with HIV epidemic. In 2016, South Africa was estimated to have had 7.1 million people living with HIV. In addition to the high burden of HIV, the social determinants of health further compromise the call for universal health coverage particularly for the poor in the country. This abstract argues that political leadership in South Africa has championed robust policy change driven by incremental funding to respond to HIV. The study was conducted by reviewing Parliamentary Reports and Annual Reports of the National Department of Health and South African National AIDS Council. The study considered national policy trajectory and political leadership through incremental budget allocation to overcome the spread and decrease the effects of HIV. The study found that policy directive of HIV prevention and provision of antiretroviral treatment is key. Arising from this political policy directive is a significant investment from the public purse allocated strategically across government departments to decrease the drivers of HIV including its socioeconomic effects. Furthermore, the study found that political leadership has demonstrated its resolve to overcome HIV through appropriating incremental funding to the extent of surpassing the international funding for HIV in South Africa. The study recognizes that funding and political leadership alone are inadequate to the challenge of HIV. However, it underscores the importance of these attributes towards mitigating and ceasing the spread of HIV. The study recommends for an increased domestic funding to HIV and drivers of social health unlike depending on international funders.

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