

# Sri Lanka

Population<sup>1</sup> (000s)

(2024)  
**23 104**



Urban population<sup>2</sup> (%)

(2024)  
**19.4**



GDP per capita<sup>3</sup>

(current US\$) (2023)  
**3 828**



Life expectancy at birth<sup>4</sup>

(years) (2021)  
**77.2**

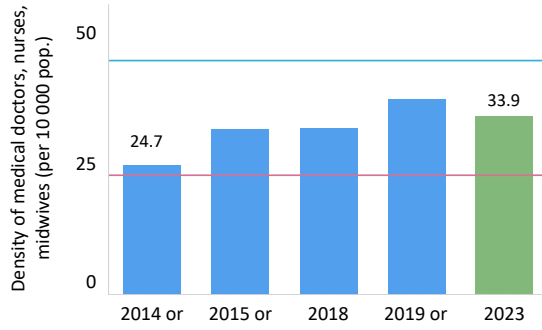


UHC SCI<sup>5</sup> (2021)

**67**

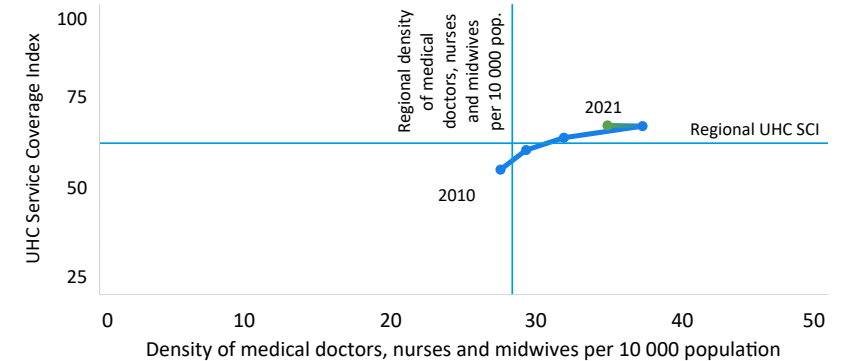


Trend in the density of medical doctors, nurses and midwives<sup>6</sup> (SDG indicator 3.c.1)

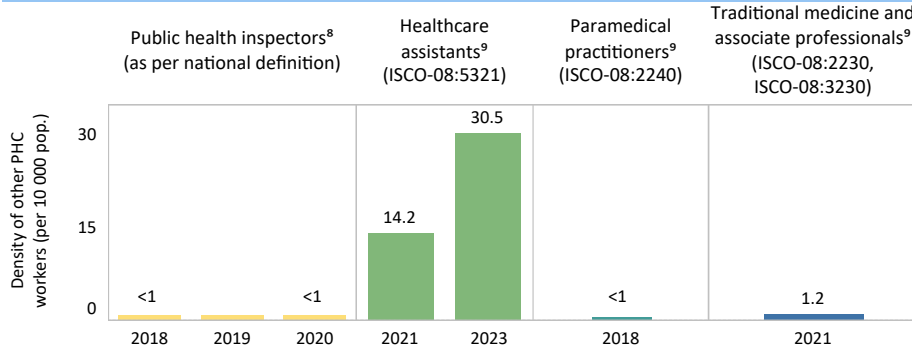


— 44.5 per 10 000 pop.: GSHRH:2030 (2016) — 22.8 per 10 000 pop.: World Health Report (2006)

Trends in UHC Service Coverage Index (SDG indicator 3.8.1) and the density of medical doctors, nurses and midwives (SDG indicator 3.c.1), 2010–2021<sup>7</sup>

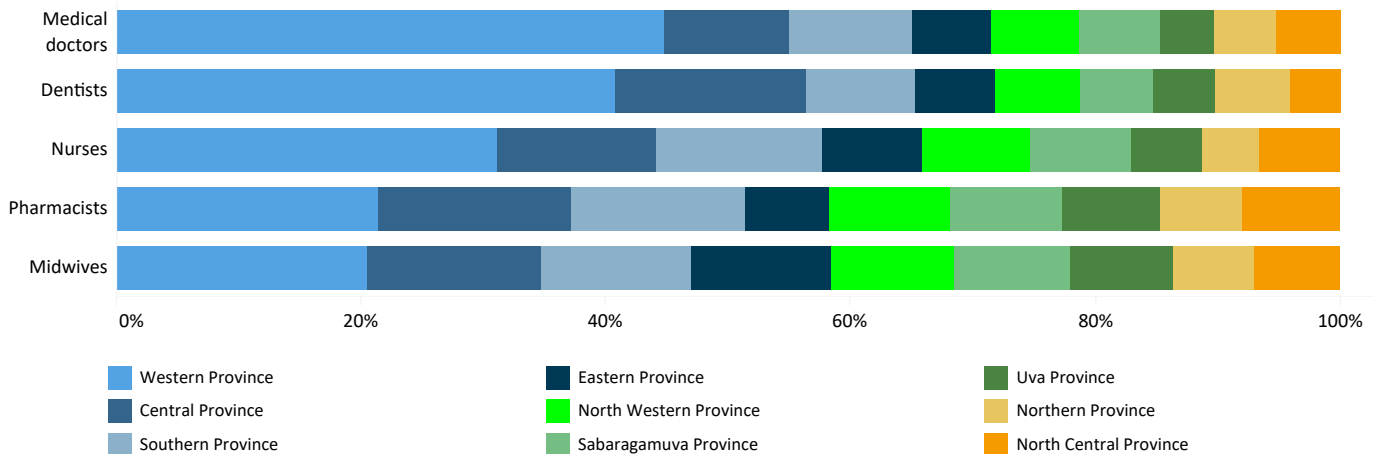


## Density of other key primary health care (PHC) workers



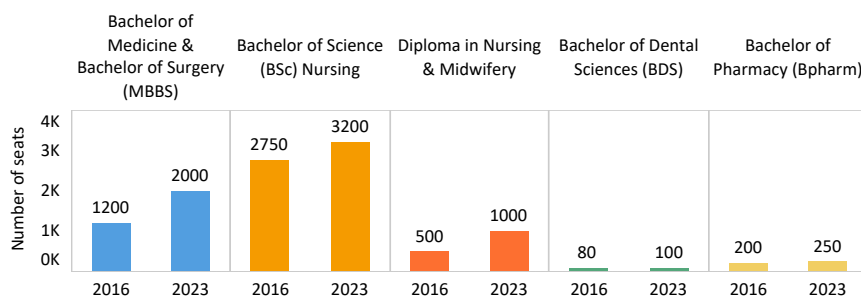
Countries in the SE Asia Region benefit from a range of key occupations close to communities. These health workers, central to the effective functioning of primary health care and district health systems, are often the first point of contact for those most vulnerable and for emergency response.

## Distribution of health workforce<sup>10</sup> (subnational) (2023)



## Production of select health workers

Number of seats<sup>11</sup> (2016–2023)



The increasing production of health workers across countries of the SE Asia Region speaks of a further increase in the availability of health workers in the near future. It is crucial to align this growth with evolving population and health system needs.

# Progress over the decade

Strategic direction & governance	Sri Lanka National Health Policy 2016–2025 focuses on restructuring human resources for health management
	Establishment of a dedicated Human Resource for Health unit (2017) in the Ministry of Health
	National Human Resources for Health Strategic Masterplan (in process of development)
Transformative education	World Federation of Medical Education certification of recognition to the Sri Lanka Medical Council Accreditation Unit, 2023
	National online Continuous Professional Development Programme for health professionals launched in 2024, with focus on mentoring
	Regional Network of Health Humanities launched in 2024
Rural retention	Government has policies to recruit students based on district quotas, with special attention to rural areas
	A one-year compulsory internship is undertaken by all medical graduates and returnees, including in peripheral and rural areas
	Identification of 'Difficult' health facilities with associated provision of financial and non-financial incentives
Key innovations for strengthening the PHC workforce	Strengthening primary care services by implementing a multidisciplinary training programme for medical officers, nursing officers and other relevant staff
	Short-term attachments of primary medical care institution staff to apex hospitals to gain specialized skills and knowledge, with involvement of professional colleges
	Establishment of a new cadre of public health nursing officers and ongoing consideration of higher-grade medical officers (as intermediate cadre)
International migration	A major challenge following the COVID-19 pandemic and linked to subsequent economic crisis
	In 2023, it is estimated that 126 specialists and 860 Medical Officers emigrated, equivalent to a 6.1% attrition rate for specialists and 4.1% attrition rate for Medical Officers
Identified achievement, challenges and future priorities	<b>Achievements:</b> creation of a dedicated HRH unit; development and launch of national Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme; and online execution of regulatory processes
	<b>Challenges:</b> ongoing financial crisis contributing to recruitment challenges and significant brain drain; maldistribution and challenges in maintaining appropriate skill-mix for evolving health needs
	<b>Priorities:</b> development of HRH Strategic Master Plan (including projections and norms), development of a comprehensive HRH management information system, ensuring financial sustainability of HRH, robust national health workforce migration policy responsive to national health needs, strengthened grievance management mechanism and international collaboration

## References

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- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2023 Revision*. <https://population.un.org/wup/Download/>. Accessed 29 July 2024.
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- World Health Organization. *World Health Statistics 2024*. World Health Organization, 2024, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/world-health-statistics>.
- UHC Global Monitoring Report 2023*. World Health Organization, 2023, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240066060>.
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- See for UHC SCI: WHO Global Health Observatory (GHO), accessed on 17 July 2024; See for medical doctors, nurses and midwives: National Health Workforce Accounts (Ministry of Health, Academia, Other Databases) online portal as on 10 September 2024; Final Report Projecting the supply of and need for medical doctors and specialists in Sri Lanka. United Nations World Population Prospects 2024 was used to calculate latest health workforce densities. For prior years' and for consistency, previous progress report-identified health workforce densities are presented.
- Annual Health Bulletin 2020, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. United Nations World Population Prospects 2024 was used to calculate density.
- National Health Workforce Accounts (Ministry of Health, Academia, Professional Association, Other Databases) online portal as on 10 September 2024. United Nations World Population Prospects 2024 was used to calculate latest densities.
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