

Universal Healthcare: Arab Gulf Countries

Dr. Suad Joseph, General Editor

Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies, University of California, Davis

EWIC Staff: Datasheet:

- ❖ Kuwait: The Kuwaiti government has provided universal healthcare to its citizens since 1950.¹ Expatriate workers make up two-thirds of Kuwait's 2.82 million residents. Since 1999 expats pay \$175 annually for healthcare. This number can rise if supplementary services such as x-rays are needed. Life-expectancy for Kuwaiti women is 75 years; this is an increase of 20 years since 1994 directly correlated with the rise of comprehensive healthcare reform in the country in the 1990s. Fertility rates in 1950 were 7 children per women; the number is 2.6 in 2014.²
- ❖ Qatar: By 2015 all Qatari citizens and expatriates will be covered by national health insurance. Qatari citizens will be funded by the government. Expatriate employers are responsible for their employees healthcare benefits. If there is no employer it is included in their residency permit fees.³ In 1972 comprehensive public and health care services in Qatar increased through 100% health coverage citizens and access to clean drinking water for all. The life expectancy for women since the 1970s increased from 71 to 80 years. Fertility rates in the 1970s were at 6.7 children per woman; this number is currently at 2.⁴
- ❖ Oman: Comprehensive healthcare in Oman began in 1970, starting with the reign of Sultan Qaboos. Since 1970 every five years, the Omani Ministry of Health has sought to improve the level of healthcare available: building hospitals, sending Omanis to medical school, focusing on primary care and communicable diseases. The 2010 five year plan is to address medical diseases such as obesity, common diseases and injuries. Healthcare reaches 95% of the Omani population; the remaining 5% live in remote areas and are service by mobile medical teams.⁵ Life expectancy for Omani women since 1970 has increased from 53 to 80 years. Fertility rates have decreased from 7.4 to 2.9 children per woman.⁶
- ❖ Bahrain: Bahrain's healthcare system was placed 42nd out of 194 member states in the 2000 World Health Organization Report. Bahraini nationals have healthcare paid for by the government as well as the option of private or semi-private healthcare. Expatriates are required to carry private health insurance.⁷ Life expectancy for Bahraini women was 47 in 1950; it is now close to 80 years.⁸ Fertility rates in Bahrain are 2.12 children per woman; in the 1970s the number was close to 7 children per woman.

¹ <http://gis.emro.who.int/HealthSystemObservatory/PDF/Kuwait/Health%20system%20organization.pdf>

² <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/p2k0data.asp>

³ <http://www.imtj.com/news/?entryid82=429611>

⁴ <http://www.who.int/countries/qat/en/>

⁵ http://www.moh.gov.om/en/nv_menu.php?o=reports/devofhelt.htm

⁶ <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/unpp/p2k0data.asp>

⁷ <https://www.now-health.com/hong-kong/country-guides/bahrain.aspx>

⁸ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN>