

S. African to double HIV patient treatment

December 14 2010

(AP) -- South Africa's health minister says he has brought down the cost of HIV drugs by 53 percent, enabling the government to treat twice as many patients in the next two years.

Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said in a statement Tuesday that the government saved 4.7 billion rand (\$689 million) by encouraging potential suppliers to participate in the bidding process, requesting a breakdown of costs from suppliers and monitoring price changes.

South Africa has the largest anti-retroviral distribution program in the world but pays significantly higher drug prices than other countries, Motsoaledi says. [South Africa](#) has more people living with [HIV](#) than anywhere else in the world, with 5.7 million of 50 million people infected.

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Citation: S. African to double HIV patient treatment (2010, December 14) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-12-african-hiv-patient-treatment.html>

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