

STRIDES IN HEALTH SECTOR



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The Government has taken a number of steps for improving the quality of health care in India. Serious efforts have been made to improve the quality of patient care by enhanced budget allocations, formulation of the National Health Policy, to improve the quality of medical education through the amendments in the medical council act, improve cleanliness of medical institutions through the Kaya Kalp (Clean Hospital Campaign), to improve the focus on child health with Mission Indradhanush, strengthen the non communicable disease programs and improve the implementation of the communicable disease program.

Health Sector allocations have shown a consistent increase reiterating the Government's commitment to affordable, accessible and quality health care. Actual expenditures have increased from Rs. 31285 crores in 2014-15 to Rs. 33121 crores in 2015-16 to Rs. 38343 crores in 2016-17. The Budgetary allocations for 2017-18 for Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are Rs. 47352 crores. The focus has been on establishing new tertiary care institutions. In all 13 new AIIMS have been announced in the last 3 years. In the Union Budget 2014-15, 4 new AIIMS were announced at Mangalagiri, Nagpur, Purvanchal and Kalyani. In the Union Budget 2015-16, 7 new AIIMS were announced at Guwahati, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, Kashmir, Bathinda and Tamil Nadu. In the year 2017-18 Union Budget, 2 new AIIMS have been announced for Gujarat and Jharkhand. In addition 39 State Government Medical Colleges have upgraded. The full operationalization of the 6 new AIIMS at Bhopal, Raipur, Patna, Rishikesh, Bhubaneshwar and Jodhpur was accorded high priority.

The primary aim of the National Health Policy, 2017, is to strengthen and prioritize the role of the Government in shaping health systems, make additional investments in health, healthcare services, prevention of diseases and promotion of good health. Article 47 of Indian Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy says that it shall be the duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health. The National Health Policy 2017 seeks to raise the health sector spending to 2.5 percent of GDP, create patient centric institutions, empower the patients and lay down standards for quality of treatment. It also seeks to strengthen health infrastructure to 2 beds/ 1000 population and provide free drugs, free diagnostics and essential health care in all public hospitals. The National Health Policy seeks to improve the life expectancy at birth from 67.5 years to 70 years by 2025 and reduce the infant mortality to 28 by 2018. It also seeks elimination of Leprosy, Kala Azar and Filariasis by 2017-18.

The introduction of a uniform entrance examination at undergraduate and post-graduate level has brought transparency to medical education. The Medical Council of

India Amendment Act 2016 introduced a common merit based entrance examination at National level. Government has notified the increase in post-graduate seats in 435 medical colleges with the objective of increasing the number of specialist doctors in India.

Two new schemes were launched in 2015 for improved patient care in hospitals. The Kaya Kalp (Clean Hospital) Campaign has penetrated all the way from apex tertiary care institutions like AIIMS to all CHC's of India. The dissemination of a patient friendly clean hospital is based on an award and evaluation system. The impact of thousands of public hospitals participating in a clean hospital campaign has brought significant momentum to the clean hospital campaign. One of big successes of the campaign is the introduction of mechanized cleaning and mopping in public hospitals and creation of supervisory structures for cleanliness.

The introduction of online registration system in 69 hospitals of India as part of the Digital India initiative has been path-breaking. Digitization of public hospitals had enabled a reduction of patient wait times and freed clinician times. The Government has introduced a patient centric feedback system called Mera Aspataal, The data sets of Mera Aspataal over six months in 2016 have flagged the important areas for patient dissatisfaction. Further Government has focused on fire safety in major public hospitals and has mandated that fire safety standards be maintained.

Government has focused on strengthening the non-communicable diseases program with emphasis on cancer, cardio-vascular diseases, diabetes and stroke. The National Cancer Institute at AIIMS Jhajjar campus would be an important milestone for cancer treatment in India. Operations are expected to commence by early 2018. The surge in chikengunya and dengue of 2015 was successfully handled.

Mission Indradhanush was launched on December 25, 2014 to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines for children up to two years and pregnant women. The Mission is strategically designed to achieving high quality routine immunization coverage while contributing to strengthening health systems that can be sustained over years to come. This Mission is currently implemented in 352 districts of India.

Government has continued to implement the National Rural Health Mission and National Urban Health Mission under the umbrella of the National Health Mission. Resource allocations to Institutes of National Importance, AIIMS New Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh and JIPMER Puducherry have increased significantly. Several new projects, centers, machinery & equipment have been sanctioned in these Institutions to further the trinity of objectives of medical education, medical research and patient care.

To conclude it can be said that the significant strides made in Health Sector will enable India to achieve the objectives of Health for All.

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