

# Dr. Harsh Vardhan reviews current status, and actions for management of COVID-19 with States/UTs through VC

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Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan held a meeting to review actions and preparedness for COVID-19 management through video conferencing with Health Ministers, Chief Secretaries of States and UTs and other related officers of the Health Departments, here today.

The VC saw participation from Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Delhi Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttrakhand, Odisha, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Ladakh, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Goa, Chhatisgarh etc. Senior officers from the Ministry, NCDC and ICMR were also present during the video conferencing. He also had a telephonic talk with Smt. K K Shailaja, Health Minister, Kerala who could not join in the VC, and discussed the status of COVID-19 in the state.

Addressing the participants, Dr. Harsh Vardhan stressed on the importance of social distancing for effective containment of the disease. He asked all the states to be more vigilant and implement all possible containment strategies to break the chain of the transmission of the disease in India. He urged the States/UTs for ensuring strict implementation of the Lockdown and ensure the availability of essential services and commodities. He also stressed on the importance of setting up dedicated hospitals for COVID-19 in the States. Dr Harsh Vardhan also stressed on the treatment of confirmed cases as per protocol, to ensure contact tracing in all cases and their follow up. He advised the States/UTs for effective community surveillance with specific focus on international travellers to India since last one month. In addition, he also advised them for random verification of home quarantine and action against defaulters.

During the interaction through the video conferencing, Dr Harsh Vardhan advised the States/ UTs to explore and request retired Doctors to volunteer themselves for COVID-19 work proactively. In addition, States were advised to ensure training of ambulance drivers, Call Centre personnel and EMR team members and also to update district-wise Ambulance details on the COVID-19 portal.

Dr Harsh Vardhan urged the States/UTs to attend on priority the issue of the Health Workers Transportation so that there is no shortage of doctors, nurses and other health staff in medical facilities. He advised them to make common travelling arrangements for doctors, nurses and other health workers. In addition, he took up the matter of effective coordination with the AIIMS portal for COVID-19 patient care and active coordination with IMA and other associations of nurses and paramedics.

Pointing to some recent reports about some landlords and owners evicting doctors/paramedics who were serving the country in combating COVID-19, he strongly advised the States to issue directive to landlords not to evict doctors, nurses and other health workers.

The Health Minister also stated that the Government has announced Rs. 50 Lakh insurance cover for doctors, paramedic, healthcare workers dealing with corona virus outbreak today. He advised states to provide funds under NHM to medical colleges for procuring COVID-19 related items.

He said that Ministry of Home Affairs along with other departments are playing a supporting and critical role in maintaining supplies of essential items, medicines and equipments during the 21 days lockdown. He said that proper directions are in place to ensure the availability of all essential services. In addition, he advised the States to ensure that the Pharmacies perform doorstep delivery of drugs; a notification has been issued by the

central Government in this regard, he stated. Stressing on ensuring mental health of those under quarantine, Dr Harsh Vardhan advised states to start a Helpline for those already in quarantine (psychologists). Stating that telemedicine guidelines have been issued and app is also being launched, he asked the states to identify hub of doctors who will use the app to advise people at home.

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MV/MR

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