

Dr. Harsh Vardhan reviews preparedness for Covid-19 Management in Maharashtra through Video Conferencing

Posted On: 11 JUN 2020 6:29PM by PIB Delhi

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare held a high level meeting today (via Video Conferencing) with Shri Rajesh Tope, Health Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Amit Deshmukh, Medical Education Minister of Maharashtra and DMs of COVID-19 affected districts of Maharashtra in presence of Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, MoS (HFW). Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW), Shri Rajesh Bhushan, OSD (HFW) along with the senior officials from both Centre and the States were present in the meeting.

All 36 Districts are affected in the State. Dr Harsh Vardhan personally interacted and reviewed the status of COVID-19 and its management with districts of Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, Palghar, Nagpur and Aurangabad, while all the districts were connected during the VC.

At the outset, Dr. S. K. Singh, Director, NCDC made a presentation on COVID-19 status in Maharashtra highlighting the districts that were showing higher number of active cases, case fatality rate, confirmation rate, doubling time and low testing rate. He also presented the availability of the health infrastructure and districts that need attention against the backdrop of high confirmation rates and case fatality rates.

While speaking on the current scenario of COVID-19 in Maharashtra, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "Increase in number of Containment Zones needs immediate attention. Vulnerability mapping of densely populated areas should be done for effective containment strategy to be put in place. Also, rise in Case Fatality rate should be looked into along with tests done per million population."

Regarding the health infrastructure, Dr. Harsh Vardhan advised strengthening the system of ICU, ventilators and testing labs in Maharashtra and ensuring the availability of ICU and ventilators to all forthcoming patients. With respect to the human resource management, he said quality of health care should be improved with quality training to Healthcare Workers through online training modules.

He also told the State officials that the testing labs should ensure prompt delivery of reports of COVID-19 tests to help in timely detection and management of COVID-19 patients. He said, "We have ramped up our testing capacity through a network of 602 government labs and 235 private labs (total 837 labs). We have cumulatively tested 52,13,140 samples till date and 1,51,808 samples were tested in the last 24 hours." He also stated that as on date, more than 136 lakh N95 masks and more than 106 lakh PPEs have been distributed to States/UTs and central institutions. In non-COVID hospitals, rational use of PPEs was to be ensured as per guidelines issued by the Ministry, the Union health Minister pointed out.

Dr Harsh Vardhan highlighted the need for strengthening human resource for contact tracing; logistics enhancement like including ICU beds with ventilators, beds with facility available for oxygen supplementation etc; ensuring transport for healthcare workers; and strengthening Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) activities to reduce community resistance and counselling of high risk contacts. In addition, it was important for districts to ensure strict implementation of containment plan along with epidemiological investigation of cases for complete contact tracing and strict quarantine for the inflowing persons from the major affected areas.

The State was also advised to ensure focus on essential RMNCHA+N services with special care for pregnant women along with services like blood collection/transfusion, chemotherapy, dialysis. Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "The State must ensure that essential services for TB diagnosis and management do not suffer as these patients are very much prone to the COVID-19 infection. Active survey for TB cases should be done along with the house to house surveys being conducted for COVID-19." Strict action was to be taken to ensure prohibition of spitting in public places to control the spread. Adequate measures for prevention of vector borne diseases also need to be taken, they were advised.

In delivering these services, the State officials were asked to utilize the network of more than 3,775 centres Ayushman Bharat- Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) which are functional across the State. They were advised to engage volunteers for door step delivery and Telemedicine/Tele-consultation for OPD Services. They were asked to ensure timely payment of salary /incentives for the health workers or employing temporary human resource along with adequate stocks of essential medicines. He also said, "Many trials have started for medicine and vaccine for Covid-19. We will have to be vigilant till we have finally defeated Covid-19. We must adopt good practices of each other mutually for eradication of COVID-19. All District and Municipal government officials must work in cooperation with the State and the Centre."

For all authentic & updated information on COVID-19 related technical issues, guidelines & advisories please regularly visit: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/> and @MoHFW_INDIA .

Technical queries related to COVID-19 may be sent to technicalquery.covid19@gov.in and other queries on ncov2019@gov.in and @CovidIndiaSeva.

In case of any queries on COVID-19, please call at the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare helpline no.: +91-11-23978046 or 1075 (Toll-free). List of helpline numbers of States/UTs on COVID-19 is also available at

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/coronavirushelplinenumber.pdf> .

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(Release ID: 1630917)