

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on rural healthcare

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“Public Health and Hospitals” being a State subject the primary responsibility of implementation of various health care schemes including National Health Mission lies with respective States.

The Ministry is continuously monitoring the implementation of their National Programmes & giving the required guidance to States/ UTs from time to time. States/UTs are being provided required technical and financial assistance for managing the COVID-19 Public Health Challenge from time to time.

All the States/ UTs are provided with necessary financial support under *India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package, with flexibility to use the resources based on their context and priorities*. During FY 2020-21, funds of Rs 4256.81 crore have been released to the States/ UTs as on 10.09.2020.

“Public health and hospitals” being a State subject, the primary responsibility of ensuring the availability of doctors at public health facilities lies with the respective State governments.

To address the healthcare challenges, particularly in rural areas, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched in 2005 to supplement the efforts of the State/UT governments to provide accessible, affordable and quality healthcare to all those who access public health facilities. Currently, NRHM is a sub-mission of National Health Mission (NHM).

NHM support is provided to States/ UTs for setting up of new facilities as per norms and upgradation of existing facilities for bridging the infrastructure gaps and to fill up the vacancies of Human Resource on contractual basis based on the requirement posed by them.

The States are also encouraged to adopt flexible norms for engaging specialists for public health facilities. These include ‘contracting in’ and ‘contracting out’ of specialist services and engaging specialists outside the government system for service delivery at public facilities under NHM.

States have also been allowed to offer negotiable salaries to attract Specialists including flexibility in strategies such as "You quote, we pay".

Financial support is also provided to States for providing hard area allowance, performance-based incentives, providing accommodation and transport facilities in rural and remote areas, sponsoring training programmes, etc to engaged human resources to address the issue of shortage of doctors and specialists in the public health facilities.

The Minister of State (Health and Family Welfare), Sh Ashwini Kumar Choubey stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha here today.

MV/SJ

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