



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

# Union Health Secretary reviews status of COVID vaccination with States and UTs

## States/UTs advised to increase percentage coverage of beneficiaries, increase and optimize sessions/day and commence vaccinating Frontline Workers from 1st week of February

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Shri Rajesh Bhushan, Union Health Secretary reviewed the status of COVID vaccination with Health Secretaries and NHM MDs of States and UTs, through a video conference (VC) today. One of the largest such exercise globally, the countrywide COVID19 vaccination programme was launched two weeks back on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021 by the Hon. Prime Minister.

At the outset, the Union Health Secretary appreciated the exceptional and creditworthy performance of all States and UTs on COVID19 vaccination. Elaborating on the global landmarks crossed by India, he underlined that India is the fastest country to reach not only the one million target but also two million and three million marks in COVID19 vaccination. Several other countries which have had a head start, some as much as 40-50 days, have taken a longer time to reach these targets, he pointed out.

The Union Health Secretary highlighted the following issues that need attention of the States/UTs to improve and accelerate the coverage as the country moves forward with the vaccination drive.

While some States and UTs have more than 50% coverage, they were all advised to improve the percentage coverage of vaccinated beneficiaries as there are many States and UTs that need to improve their performance on this parameter. The Health Secretary pointed out that COVID19 vaccine is available in sufficient quantity and technical glitches on CoWIN have now been resolved. States/UTs were advised to ensure that regular review meetings of the State, District and Block Task Force were held to assess the emerging challenges, understand the ground issues and promptly address them at the appropriate levels.

It was pointed that there is a huge scope for improvement in the number of average vaccinations per session. The State Health Secretaries were asked to analyze the daily variation in the number of average vaccination and take the necessary steps to increase them.



States/UTs were also asked to organize multiple simultaneous vaccination sessions/day in the health facility wherever possible. This would substantially boost the number of vaccinations per day. He urged the District Immunisation Officers to interact with the nodal officer at the session sites on a regular basis to evaluate the scope of this enhancement.

Drawing attention to the recent letter of the Health Ministry, the Union Health Secretary pointed out that a provisional digital vaccination certificate after the first dose and final certificate after completing the second dose is required to be issued. States/UTs were asked to take the necessary steps to ensure that the vaccination certificates are issued to all vaccinated beneficiaries before they exit the session.

He reiterated that validation of eligibility and verification of identity of a beneficiary is of utmost importance to ensure that only genuine and duly authenticated beneficiaries are vaccinated as per the priority group identified. In order to create Immutable Vaccination Event Records (IVER), it is essential that a reliable authentication of beneficiaries is done. Since use of Aadhar for verification provides a most reliable authentication of beneficiaries, Aadhar based authentication must be the preferred mode of verification of beneficiaries prior to the vaccination. He highlighted that CoWIN software interface provides for authentication of beneficiaries through use of Aadhar, and urged States and UTs that the vaccinators should be sensitized to do proper authentication of beneficiaries. The compliance should be strictly monitored at the District level and State level in the District Task Force and State Task Force meetings.

The importance of timely data reconciliation was also emphasized upon during the detailed review meeting. As the vaccination drive has substantially stabilized in the past two weeks, States/UTs were strongly urged to reconcile the arrear data on the CoWIN app. This shall duly ensure that all beneficiaries are accounted for as the exercise moves forward to its next phase.

As has already been communicated, vaccination of the frontline workers shall commence from the first week of February 2021. The State/UT health authorities were advised to undertake the necessary planning for ensuring smooth implementation of this phase.

A comprehensive discussion of issues and feedback from the States and UTs was held during the review meeting.

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HFV/COVID SECY Vaccination Review/30<sup>th</sup> January2021/3

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