



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Centre Rushes Multi-disciplinary High Level Central teams to States/UTs witnessing surge in cases

Health Secretary writes to 7 States/UTs on Recent Surge in COVID19 Cases & advises specific measures to be taken

Posted On: 24 FEB 2021 11:58AM by PIB Delhi

The Centre has deputed high level multi-disciplinary teams to Maharashtra, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for supporting them in public health measures for targeted COVID response and management, and effectively tackling the pandemic. The three –member multidisciplinary teams are headed by Joint Secretary level officers in the Health Ministry. These teams will work closely with the States/UT administration and ascertain reasons for recent surge in the number of COVID19 cases. They will also coordinate with health authorities of the States/UT for requisite COVID19 control measures to break the chain of transmission. The States/UT has been advised for regular critical review of the emerging situation with concerned District officials to ensure that gains made so far in COVID management are not lost.

The Centre has also written to Maharashtra, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which have been witnessing a rise in daily COVID cases, along with decreasing proportion of RT-PCR tests and rise in positivity in some districts.

In the letter written by the Union Health Secretary, he has exhorted Maharashtra, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to focus on undertaking aggressive measures to break the chain of transmission and to ensure that RT-PCR testing is amplified to flush out hitherto undetected cases from the population. These States/UT have been advised to increase testing in a focussed manner in the affected districts with the appropriate split of RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Tests and to also ensure that all symptomatic negatives of antigen tests are compulsorily tested via RT-PCR tests. The positive persons must be promptly isolated/hospitalised, all their close contacts be traced and also tested without delay.

The Centre has reminded the States/UTs that any laxity in implementing stringent measures to curb the spread, especially in view of new strain of virus observed in certain countries, could compound the situation. The Union Health Secretary has separately requested the Chief Secretaries of these 19 States



and UTs to provide time to these High Level Central teams to debrief the respective Chief Secretaries at the conclusion of their State visits.

These measures are in line with Government of India's graded and proactive approach to contain COVID across the country. The Health Ministry has been regularly engaging with States and UTs that have been exhibiting either a sudden surge in COVID cases, high caseload or reporting a higher mortality in some districts. The teams interact with the field authorities to get a first hand understanding of the challenges and issues being faced by them.

MV/SJ

HFV/ Centre writes to States/UTs /24th February2021/2

(Release ID: 1700363) Visitor Counter : 196

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